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By The Sword Divided: The English Civil War as Sunday-Night Television Drama

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ABSTRACT
The English Civil War's absence from screen-drama has been long bemoaned. Although scholars have started interrogating the topic, particularly with reference to cinematic depictions, thus far there has been total critical neglect of a unique attempt to bring the wars onto the small screen, as popular primetime 'Sunday-night' period drama. This article examines this attempt, the BBC1 show, By The Sword Divided (1983-1985), considering its representation of warfare and use of historical research and contextualizing it against popular understandings of civil war history specifically and perceptions of warfare more generally, as well as formats of 1980s popular television drama.

Introduction

The seventeenth century being so little 'manifest[ed] in contemporary culture, particularly visual culture or in popular media', despite its significance in national political history, academic culture, and 'intellectual life after the advent of television and film', Jerome de Groot described as a 'peculiarity'.[1] This dramatically turbulent and significant period's absence from screen drama, particularly that of the Civil Wars (1642-1660), has bewildered and frustrated enthusiasts and scholars. Several scholars have considered the topic, some, attempting to explain its absence, but most analysing those depictions that do exist through the lens of particular figures and/or cultural products. Mostly focused on film rather than television, scholarship has virtually

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[1]Jerome de Groot, '"Welcome to Babylon": Performing and Screening the English Revolution' in Mark Thornton Burnett and Adrian Streete (eds), *Filming and Performing Renaissance History*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 70.

ignored a significant exception to this absence of the wars from mainstream popular culture, the BBC's Sunday-night serial drama, *By The Sword Divided* (1983-1985).[2]

This article places *By The Sword*, into the contexts of depictions of history on screen, specifically period drama television serials, and contemporary formulae of primetime television in 1980s Britain. It will then analyse its coverage of key events, before examining its portrayal of technical aspects of historical warfare and weaponry, and the depiction of civilians at war. The influence of cultural understandings of the nature of war, utilisation of historical research and popular tropes, and aesthetic and logistic production choices will be considered. Analysing the (re)construction of the conflict within this single but long-term production against these contexts will help uncover how the series reflected public understandings of the civil war, and elucidate the place of warfare within contemporary public historical cultures which increasingly embraced social history approaches.

John Hawkesworth & 'Golden Age' Sunday-Night Period Drama.

Since the BBC's famously successful 1967 *Forsyte Saga* adaptation, British television developed what Claire Monk has described as 'a template' for 'period "event television" dramas on a vast multi-episodic scale' that created certain expectations for producers and audiences.[3] Sunday evenings became an expected, prestigious slot for such offerings, associated in long-term cultural mindsets with 'quality drama' which combined 'period nostalgia' and the 'cultural prestige' of conveying a sense of a 'national' past. British Television drama experienced a 'golden age' of funding and creative freedom and throughout the 1970s both channels screened numerous successful 'historical' dramas, several very popular and commercially.[4] By the early-1980s, British 'heritage' productions for both big and small screen had a strong market

[2]Ronald Hutton, 'Why Don't the Stuarts Get Filmed?' in Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film: Historical Perspectives*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 246-258. David Rowlinson, 'What's the Future for the 17th century on screen?' https://earlofmanchesters.co.uk/whats-the-future-for-the-17th-century-on-screen/. Accessed 5 January 2024, Sarah Betts, 'Roundhead Reputations Twenty Years On: Cultural Memory Studies and the English Civil War', *English Historical Review*, Vol.138, No.593, (August, 2023), pp. 985-986.

[3]Claire Monk, 'Pageantry and Populism, Democratization and Dissent: The Forgotten 1970s' in James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo (eds), *Upstairs and Downstairs: British Costume Drama Television from The Forsyte Sage to Downton Abbey*, (Lanham; London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), pp. 10, 17-18,

[4]Estella Tincknell, 'Dowagers, Debs, Nuns and Babies: The Politics of Nostalgia and the Older Woman in the British Sunday Night Television Serial', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, Vol. 10, No. 4, (2013), pp. 769-784 (p.773), Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History*, (London: BFI Publishing, 2003), p. 4.

and reputation, domestically and internationally. Investment in such projects increased, bigger budgets were spent on both production quality and marketing, and, in the television industry, aspirations/assumptions set from inception about 'potential as "heritage export"'.[5] Many 1970s hits were exported to America via PBS's *Masterpiece Theatre*, creating a brand identity culturally 'synonymous' with 'Anglophiliac', nostalgic 'heritage shorthand', that, despite difficulties in definitively generically categorising diverse offerings of broadly 'historical' drama, nonetheless highlighted a 'very particular type' of British 'heritage quality' cultural product, recognisable via 'attenti[on] to detail', and acting, 'aesthetic', and 'pacing' styles.[6]

Perhaps the 1970s most successful and enduringly famous of this 'type' was ITV's original, multi-series *Upstairs, Downstairs* (LWT 1971-1975), following an Edwardian to late-1920s Belgravian household, a big hit in both the UK and America. It spawned tie-in publications including novelisations from authors who worked in dramatic broadcasting, the first two by the show's producer, John Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth was seen as instrumental in the show's success and, clearly hopeful of capturing some of *Upstairs, Downstairs*'s audience, the BBC broadcast two series of his own creation, *The Duchess of Duke Street* (1976-1977). Following a woman from domestic servant, to high-end hotel proprietress, this series employed a similar setting, and many of the same creative team, as *Upstairs, Downstairs*. It was popular, award-winning, broadcast in America, and novelised. Academics have traditionally considered period drama culturally 'conservative', socially snobbish, and unnuanced in approaching history, focussed on 'superficial costume and the artifices of class…[and] enshrine[ing] particular erroneous myths about historical identity' and events, and historical dramas have always faced criticism for sacrificing accuracy for dramatic sensationalism.[7] Original scripts, lacking direct historic source-text, fictional protagonists, and focus on mundane period ephemera, left shows like *Upstairs, Downstairs* particularly vulnerable to classification as superficial commercial products rather than historically educational texts.[8] But, as Gary Edgerton has argued, television is a significant, even 'principal',

[5]Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 15-16; Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*, Second Edition, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 225.

[6]Simone Knox, '*Masterpiece Theatre* and British Drama Imports on US Television: Discourses of Tension', *Cultural Studies in Television*, Vol.7, No.1, (Spring, 2012), pp. 30-31; Elke Weissmann; *Transnational Television Drama: Special Relations and Mutual Influence Between the US and the UK*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 74-75; Monk, 'Pageantry and Populism', pp. 4, 6-7, 11-12.

[7]De Groot, *Consuming History*, pp. 223-224.

[8]Helen Wheatley, 'Rooms Within Rooms: *Upstairs, Downstairs* and the Studio Costume Drama of the 1970s' in Catherine Johnson and Rob Turnock (eds), *ITV Cultures:*

source of 'history' for 'most people', and thus has been increasingly examined as a resource for teaching, and for studying popular history.[9] Furthermore, as Emma Hanna notes, *Upstairs, Downstairs*'s creators took the series' historical element seriously, particularly the depiction of the 1914-18 war, 'feel[ing] themselves to be deeply involved in the history of the First World War', researching and building-upon personal connections amongst cast and crew, and seemingly alert to a sense of responsibility, towards the audience and the national past, to be both accurate and 'identifiable'.[10] That one of those family connections was Hawkesworth's is noteworthy because personal ancestral links to both sides of the English Civil Wars apparently inspired him to create *By The Sword Divided*.[11]

By The Sword Divided

With its cover-headline, 'For King or Parliament? One family takes two sides', and follow-up feature inside on 're-creating the seventeenth century', *Radio Times* introduced BBC1's 1983 autumn-season centre-piece costume drama.[12] Allocating an early prime-time Sunday evening slot, and heavily promoting *By The Sword*'s debut, the BBC, press-critics concluded, was 'obviously expect[ing]…a major hit'.[13] Hawkesworth's reputation was crucial to the marketing, with listings and features name-checking him as creator and citing his previous hits to build anticipation, consolidating such a strong impression that more than one critic concluded that essentially 'The Beeb's new Sunday biggie…[wa]s a sort of Upstairs, Downstairs in [the] ringlets and pantomime boots' of a different period dress.[14] Certainly the period was somewhat novel. Hawkesworth's '70s hits, like many other contemporary popular

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Independent Television Over Fifty Years, (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), pp. 145-149, 156.

[9]Gary R. Egerton, 'Introduction: Television as Historian: A Different Kind of History Altogether' in Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins (eds), *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), pp. 1-16; Nicola Bishop, 'Presenting the Past: New Directions in Television History' in Sam Edwards, Michael Dolski and Faye Sayer (eds), *Histories On Screen: The Past and Present in Anglo-American Cinema and Television*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 277-289.

[10]Emma Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen: Representing the First World War in Contemporary Britain*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 126-129.

[11]Peter Oliver, 'The War That Split a Family', *Western Daily Press*, 15 October 1983, p. 16.

[12]Jim Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', *Radio Times*, 15-21 October1983, pp. 84-91.

[13]Albert Watson, 'Sharon's Bid For Fame', *Evening Chronicle*, 15 October 1983, p. 13.

[14]Hilary Kingsley, 'In My View: Sword That Is Blunt', *Daily Mirror*, 17 October 1983, p. 17. Michael Poole, 'Revolutionary Saga', *The Listener*, No. 2830, 13 October 1983, p. 38.

historical serials, were both Edwardian-set. Regency/Victorian literary adaptations were consistently popular, and the BBC experienced significant success with Tudor historicals. But the Seventeenth Century's complex internecine political and military conflicts had a less well-tested appeal. Hawkesworth himself found it inexplicable that 'nobody' had 'fully' dramatised 'one of the most important periods in our history', which shaped national society and 'government' into the present. Having long-considered it 'extraordinarily neglected' considering its historical importance, he had waited '14 years' for time for period research to flesh-out his concept, and the 'Midas touch'-record to secure BBC-backing.[15]

The chronologically remoter period, more alien to historical culture, struck a more awkward artificial, 'Shakespeare-ese' tone for some compared to the Edwardian dramas, but modern production technologies and cultures rendered the series an improvement on its predecessors in terms of visual spectacle.[16] New capabilities and vogue for location filming were transforming the 1980s into an era of country-house aesthetic 'heritage' dramas, making 'extensive' use of outdoor, picturesque heritage sites and rural landscapes. Following this model, epitomised by Granada's recent spectacular success, *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), but also adopted by lower-key productions like BBC2's *Mansfield Park* (1983), significant portions of *By The Sword* were shot outside, its chief location, Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire, was a focal point of action, practically an extra protagonist in the drama, in a very different manner from the 'set-bound' studio aesthetic of *Upstairs, Downstairs*.[17] A key selling-point of *By The Sword* as an historical piece then, was indulgence in the combination of the exoticism of the relatively distant past, combined with a comfortable sense of continuity with an old England, a perfect 'excuse', a tv-listing reminded, for 'lavish costumes and showing off our architectural heritage'.[18]

Dramatically Hawkesworth built on previous success, and, one journalist opined, *By The Sword* had 'all the Hawkesworthian traits of a successful serial'.[19] Many interiors were shot in-studio adding to familiar impressions of 'quality' and 'heritage' drama which Elke Weissmann argues were culturally implied, even inherent, in the 'deliberate

[15]Ian Lyness, 'John's Golden Touch Turns to Epic', *Bristol Evening Post*, 8 September 1983, p. 13; 'Nothing Like a History Lesson', *Nottingham Evening Post Supplement*, 22 October 1983, p. 10.
[16]Kingsley, 'Sword That Is Blunt'.
[17]Tom Bragg, 'History's Drama: Narrative Space in "Golden Age" British Television Drama' in Leggott and Taddeo, *Upstairs and Downstairs*, p. 23.
[18]*Cambridge Evening News*, 15 October 1983, p. 3.
[19]Alec Lom, 'Shooting a War the Civil Way', *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 11 August 1983, p. 20.

aesthetic choice of theatricality' consolidated by the '70s dramas as 'generic markers'.[20] Michael Poole also observed a particular 'mythology' conveyed, 'that of television family saga' in the tradition, he specified, of *Forsyte Saga* and *Upstairs, Downstairs*, with 'sense of period' and national historic moments 'emerg[ing] through the dynastic and domestic small-change of life in an upper-class household', and clearly-purposed rooms, for cooking, dining, and sleeping, aesthetically reminding of that domesticity, both specifically in *By The Sword*, and generically in reference to the well-known *mise-en-scène* of the previous decades' hits. Particular to Hawkesworth's own reputation, rooms were also demarcated by rank, and the kitchen was once again a key location, emblematic also of his re-use of the 'landmark' and popular inclusion of servants in the narrative, which had itself been a 'deliberate' choice by the creators of *Upstairs, Downstairs* to 'redress' the upper-class focus of the influential *Forsyte Saga*, and use the freedom of original narrative and long-running format to explore aspects of social history and 'everyday' heritage which were becoming an increasing feature of contemporary historical cultures.[21] Heightening his new drama's association with his famous back-catalogue, Hawkesworth also brought across old colleagues like producer, Brian Spiby, and writers, Jeremy Paul and Alfred Shaughnessy (See Figure 1).

[20]Weissmann, *Transnational Television*, pp. 71-72.

[21]James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo, 'Introduction' in Leggott and Taddeo, *Upstairs and Downstairs*, p. xvi Katherine Byrne, *Edwardians on Screen: From Downton Abbey to Parade's End*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp. 9, 24-25; Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*: *Past and Present in Contemporary Culture,* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 210-212, 260, 263.

Episode Number	Series 1 (1983)	Date Given in Opening Titles	Writer
1	Gather Ye Rosebuds	May 1640	Jermey Paul
2	The War Without an Enemy	Summer 1641	John Hawkesworth
3	The Sound of Drums	September 1642	Alfred Shaughnessy
4	A Silver Moon	July 1643	Jeremy Paul
5	The Edge of the Sword	June 1644	Alexander Baron
6	Outrageous Fortune	Summer 1645	Alfred Shaughnessy
7	A Sea of Dangers	September 1645	John Hawkesworth
8	Ring of Fire	September 1645	John Hawkesworth
9	Ashes to Ashes	September 1645	Jeremy Paul
10	Not Peace, But a Sword	June 1647	Alexander Baron

Episode Number	Series 2 (1985)	Date Given in Opening Titles	Writer
1	Conflicts	1648	Jermey Paul
2	Cruel Necessity	1649	John Hawkesworth
3	Cromwell at Arnescote	1649	Carey Harrison
4	Witch Hunt	1650	Alexander Baron
5	Escape	1651	Jeremy Paul
6	Fateful Days	1653	Alexander Baron
7	Forlorn Hope	1655	Alexander Baron
8	The Mailed Fist	1657	Alexander Baron
9	Retribution	1658	Jeremy Paul
10	Restoration	1660	John Hawkesworth

Figure 1: Episodes of By The Sword Divided (BBC 1983-1985)

The protagonists were fictional Arnescote Castle's Laceys, an ancient aristocratic family who, dialogue informs, have served monarchs, and fought in famous battles of English history, for generations. Patriarch, Sir Martin, is the widowed father of twins, Tom and Anne, and younger daughter, Lucinda. Other regular cast are servants, led by Cropper (Steward), and Goodwife Margaret (Housekeeper), poor relation, Susan Protheroe, and wealthy merchant, Sir Austin Fletcher and his son John, friends who become family when Anne and John marry, pre-war, in Episode 1:1. The titular division comes with war in 1642 when the Fletchers, including Anne, side with Parliament, in which John sits as MP for the fictional local town of Swinford, while the Laceys (and their household) remain staunchly loyal to the king. Series One covered the period from 1640, through the 'First Civil War' (1642-1646), to its immediate aftermath. In early-1985, a second series aired, covering the 'Second Civil War' (1648), Charles I's imprisonment and execution in 1649, and the 1651 Battle of Worcester, the Interregnum period, Oliver Cromwell's government and eventual death, and finally Charles II's Restoration in 1660. All twenty episodes were dated by on-screen text at the end of the opening titles alerting viewers to the passage of time.

Hawkesworth's team again took the historical element very seriously. He reported to the writing team in August 1982 that he and Paul had already done 'much reading and

research', as well as 'collect[ing] vocabulary and quotations' for better creation of period 'flavour'. He also provided a bibliography of key works, contemporary and historiographic, and established a team reference 'library' to be managed by 'Brian Spiby's secretary'.[22] Much use was made of this reading to directly lift accounts, dialogue, and specific phrases from period documents and traditional historiography. This was very much in keeping with notions of 'authenticity', and responsible and educational value which became associated with, particularly BBC, historical drama of this period, later favourably compared with genre's more recently criticised 'dumbing down' with writers and broadcasters perceived as rejecting a beloved style of quality cultural production in favour of commercial sensationalism.[23] Once again, connections were publicly drawn between the production and actual historical events, with not only Hawkesworth's familial connections publicised, but also aristocratic director, Henry Herbert's, whose ancestor had 'switched sides' to 'preserve' his ancestral home.[24] Hawkesworth included copies of Rockingham's guidebook in his writers' reference-pack, and even its Civil War story was shared to embellish its starring role as Arnescote with authentic colour.[25]

Headlining a busy autumn schedule including a much-commented-on deluge of British-made programming, *By The Sword* seems generally well-received. 'Historical accuracy' and 'authenticity' was praised, but the popular drama element was appreciated too, one commentator describing it as 'a sort of mediaeval Dallas' thanks to 'lots of nookie and intrigue'.[26] Bought by PBS for *Masterpiece*, marketing again specifically highlighted Hawkesworth's reputation, and although the less familiar setting 'failed to cut it' with American audiences in the same way as those previous hits, they still aired both series,

[22]Museum of English Rural Life (hereinafter MERL) MS 5126/346, John Hawkesworth, 'By The Sword Divided: Notes and Outlines for a Television Series, 31 August 1982', pp. 1, 3, 9-11.
[23]Sarah Betts, 'Power and Passion: Seventeenth-Century Masculinities Dramatised on the BBC in the Twenty-First Century' in Katherine Byrne, James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo (eds), *Conflicting Masculinities: Men in Television Period Drama*, (London: IB Tauris, 2018), pp. 72, 86.
[24]Olinda Adeane, 'Peer Through The Lens', *Harpers & Queen*, January 1984, p. 54.
[25]MERL MS 5126/346. 'TV War Divides Fortress Again', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 8 August 1983, p. 9. Watson, 'Sharon's Bid for Fame'. Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', pp. 89-90.
[26]Neil Clements, 'Did You Watch..?', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 19 October 1983, p. 2. Ann Pacey, 'A Look-In', *Sunday People*, 23 October 1983, p. 25; Iain Pryde Campbell, 'Review', *Press and Journal*, 29 October 1983, p. 9; John Williams, 'Golly, Gosh, Gush – You're the Grate-est', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 29 October 1983, p. 3; Nina Myskow, 'Watch It!', *Sunday People,* 23 October 1983, p. 24.

and it slotted easily into the 'popular imagination' of *Masterpiece*'s standard fare.[27] In the UK, it was one of an increasing number of 'home-grown' productions with subtitle-availability from initiation, widening accessibility, and an 'increased' general 'interest' in the period was attributed to the show, and capitalised on in publishing and tourism industries, and by re-enactment groups.[28] Mollie Hardwick, noveliser of Hawkesworth's previous hits, brought out a novel in association with the series, with cast-photograph on the cover which also adorned a release of the series music, and thirty-six *By The Sword* costumes were on public exhibition at Longleat House for several months in 1983/4.[29] Rockingham Castle advertised themselves as 'Arnescote' for years to come, and invited the series-star, Timothy Bentinck (Tom Lacey) to open an event there in May 1984.[30]

In a new era of country house screen-tourism, and cooperation between independent historic houses and 'heritage' production, highly recommended by Rockingham's owners, Hawkesworth's own ancestor's civil wartime destruction of its Castle, was noted, as having 'denied' Kenilworth the benefits of 'a nice touch of TV fame'.[31] In the longer-term, although the series never achieved the popularity of Hawkesworth's Edwardian works, it was fondly remembered as something of a cult classic, its eventual DVD-release delighting long-term fans many of whom attributed lifelong interest in the period, and/or joining re-enactment societies, to watching the original broadcast.[32] Anecdotally, lack of alternative material, the carefully-dated and detailed account of the period, and extensive use of seventeenth-century sources, rendered the series a popular teaching-aid for some years, even at university level.

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[27]'A Family Torn By Strife', *New York Times*, 20 March 1986, p. A2; 'Public TV', *Variety*, 23 November 1988, p. 90. John O'Connor, "'By the Sword Divided,' on "Masterpiece Theater"", *New York Times*, 21 March 1986, p. C34; Rebecca Eaton, *Making Masterpiece: 25 Years Behind the Scenes at Masterpiece Theatre and Mystery! On PBS*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2013), p. 136; Knox, '*Masterpiece Theatre* and British Drama Imports', pp. 29-32.

[28]'TV Extra…' *Lincolnshire Echo*, 5 December 1983, p. 6. 'Calling All Budding Roundheads and Cavaliers', *Herts and Essex Observer*, 8 December 1983, p. 8.

[29]Mollie Hardwick, *By The Sword Divided*, (London: Century Publishing, 1983). Stuart Russell, 'Mail TV', *Daily Mail*, 8 November 1983, p. 3.

[30]'Rockingham: A Grand Family Day', *Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury*, 25 May 1984, p. 9.

[31]Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, 'Arnescote And All That', *The Field*, Vol. 263, Iss.6830, (December, 1983), p. 1321; 'Castle Ruins Its Chances', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 15 October 1983 p. 9.

[32]Amazon.com Reviews, https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/B0002MGZ1O/ref=cm_cr_othr_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Coverage of Civil War Events

Discussing the Civil War's absence from contemporary popular culture, Hawkesworth mentioned a sole example of 'a film about Cromwell' (presumably *Cromwell* (1970)), but claimed 'no-one' had previously 'done it' for television.[33] The BBC *had* actually, adapted nineteenth-century historical novels, *Woodstock* and *Children of the New Forest*, and screened some one-off TV-plays, but these generally focused on particular moments, events, and/or historical figures rather than the entire period's ideological, military, and political conflict. Both de Groot and Ronald Hutton posit the era's controversies and complexities accounting for lack of enthusiasm for adapting it for screen.[34] How then did Hawkesworth approach narrating this complex twenty-year story via twenty, one-hour, episodes? Partly, on-screen, through re-creation of historical and cultural hooks that both created 'authentic' sense of period, and situated the Laceys' drama within an identifiable national-historical chronology. Opening credits dating helped do this, as did borrowing phrasing from contemporary and popular-historiographical documents and literature (including fiction). So too did using period music and hymns, costumes recreated from portraiture and 'tailor's bill[s] and descriptions', and visual allusions to well-known artworks depicting scenes like the pre-war court, Cromwell viewing Charles I's body, or Charles II's disguise after the Battle of Worcester (1651), all actively researched by the production team.[35] Most comprehensively, Episode 2:2, depicts Charles I's well-documented and nationally-mythologised trial and execution.

The Fletchers are inserted into the historical action and dialogue, John even signing the death warrant, while Edward Ferrar, a royalist viscount Lucinda marries in Episode 1:7, and Arnescote servant, Dick Skinner, wait on Charles, but the characters are seen in London, attending an historical event portrayed as accurately as possible. Extensive on-screen removal of the fictional protagonists to historic scenes is rare. Although characters visit London, and a few other historic locations such as Charles I's wartime-court at Oxford, or the Royalist court-in-exile in France, most of *By The Sword*'s narrative takes place around Arnescote Castle, or the Fletchers' fictional homes nearby. Encounters with genuine historical figures reinforced periodisation, and placement of Arnescote and the Laceys/Fletchers at the heart of the national story. Sometimes these occur on visits to the aforementioned historical locations, but

[33]Lom, 'Shooting a War the Civil Way'.

[34]De Groot, '"Welcome to Babylon"', p.80; Hutton, 'Why Don't the Stuarts Get Filmed?', pp. 249, 257-258.

[35]MERL MS 5126/346. Russell, 'Mail TV'. Sarah Betts, 'Henrietta Maria, "Queen of Tears"?: Picturing and Performing the Cavalier Queen' in Estelle Paranque (ed), *Remembering Queens and Kings of Early Modern England and France: Reputation, Reinterpretation, and Reincarnation*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 160.)

Arnescote also hosts Charles I, his nephew, Rupert, several Royalist commanders, Cromwell and his son-in-law, and Charles II, as a fugitive from Worcester, and, later, restored king. However, Charles II's first visit, transposing well-known incidents from his famous escape into the fictional family's locality and narrative, marks the only occasion where an historical visitor brought an historical event actually into Arnescote itself.

Apart from the dramatic necessity of keeping the Lacey/Fletcher/Arnescote original narrative central, and desire to take full advantage of location filming at Rockingham, budgetary and other logistic constraints made recreating largescale events in other sets and locations impossible, and desire to preserve authenticity made bringing well-recorded but smaller-scale events to them implausible. But these key national-scale events, and particularly the warfare itself are integral to understanding the war's motivations and outcomes, as well as the progress of historical time. Thus, rather than being directly shot, most happens off-screen but is then recounted, sometimes in great detail, on-screen. As an MP, John is well-connected to receive news, while Tom is a prominent Royalist officer, and close friend and confidante of Prince Rupert. Other comers and goers at Arnescote also bring particulars of wider events, giving the audience a mix of directly reported news interspersed with its discussion amongst family or servants.

Surveying historical novels about the Civil Wars, Farah Mendlesohn observes that popular cultural memory of them almost unfailingly references a handful of major battles recognised as having national significance.[36] Unsurprisingly, *By The Sword* features them prominently. Arnescote was very carefully 'imagined', though never explicitly declared, to be located in Warwickshire, a central location, close to Oxford but not impractically far from London, within easy reach of the Midland-locations of three of those key battles, Edgehill (1642), Naseby (1645), and Worcester (1651), and near enough for plausible familiarity with Roundway Down (1643) and Cropredy Bridge (1644). Mindful of this, and his own familial history, Hawkesworth initially sought a location there, but was frustrated by destruction levels. He found Rockingham the 'perfect' solution, having actually 'been besieged in the Civil War but [not] completely blown up'.[37] Of the four best-known battles, Tom misses only Marston Moor (1644). Rupert *was* at this battle, losing, Tom later references, his beloved dog, but its timing for the series narrative-arc, and its relatively distant Yorkshire location, rendered it dramatically inconvenient for Tom to be there. Still

[36]Farah Mendlesohn, *Creating Memory: Historical Fiction and the English Civil Wars*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 99-103.
[37]MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', p. 2. 'Nothing Like a History Lesson'. *Nottingham Evening Post*.

the battle and its significance are meticulously included when Tom, arriving to rescue Arnescote from temporary roundhead occupation, recounts,

> learn[ing] of a great battle in the North …. place called Marston Moor. We were whipped. Cut to pieces …. we've been badly hurt …. the King is forced back to Oxford. And [Arnescote] is named as one of the outer garrisons that must be manned to protect it.[38]

More immediate news of Edgehill and Naseby comes directly from the battlefields. Edgehill, the war's first large-scale battle, is important narratively as the household-at-large's first experience of battle, 'the Lacey Troop' fighting, and so nearby that battle-sounds can be heard from Arnescote. Significantly, it is Sir Martin's first *and* last battle-proper as he seriously wounded, and, the audience is repeatedly informed, would have died there if Arnescote's proximity and the King's interest hadn't facilitated his being stretchered home for nursing, providing Tom with an excuse to visit post-battle and impart details and informed assessment of consequences. Naseby is farther, but still near enough that the King requests shelter in its aftermath. Although the battle itself is neither shown, nor featured as prominently as Edgehill, Ferrar details its course, and their defeat's significance is highlighted via the Royalist generals' conference once at Arnescote. Audiences were also prepared for this significance through TV-listings promising 'the war['s] …. dramatic turn with the Battle of Naseby'.[39]

Set mostly during the Interregnum, with Sir Martin now killed-off, Series Two featured less historical *military* action, focusing rather on political events, and socio-cultural experience, of the period. Episodes themed around well-known moments and stereotyped iconography: Charles I's trial, Charles II escape and later restoration, and the coming of a witchfinder (a concept familiar and associated with the civil war period in popular culture from 1968 film *Witchfinder General*).[40] Royalist defeat at Worcester is key to Episode 2:5's plot, and overall series narrative, but again the battle is off-screen, Susan's husband relaying salient details after capture there. Mention is made of the Royalist uprisings of 1655, a local arm of which is written-in to be the chief storyline of Episode 2:7, bringing about the deaths of Ferrar and long-time Lacey servant (and trooper), Walter Jackman. These uprisings instigate the implementation of military rule under district Major-Generals which viewers see Cromwell enact, before Arnescote is made fictional General Horton's regional headquarters.

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[38]Alexander Baron, 'The Edge of the Sword', *By The Sword Divided*, 1:5.
[39]'Weekend TV', *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 19 November 1983.
[40]De Groot, "'Welcome to Babylon'", p. 74. James Sharpe 'The Cinematic Treatment of Early Modern Witch Trials' in Burnett and Streete, *Filming and Performing Renaissance History*, pp. 89-94.

Second Civil War action had been reported in Episode 2:1, and Tom's participation confirmed when he secretly seeks help at Arnescote following wounding escaping the infamous Siege of Colchester. Mendlesohn has noted that although a significant proportion of civil war action involved sieges, urban and manorial, including large-scale and significant ones, they haven't garnered the same long-term notoriety in national historical narratives as the famous battles.[41] Beyond Colchester, *By the Sword* referenced several significant First Civil War sieges during Series One (at Leicester, Bristol, Oxford, and Basing House), before fictional royalist agent, Frances Neville is introduced in Series Two as having been widowed during the Sieges of Newark (1643-1646). With royalist fortunes declining, Tom also mentions the significance of siege warfare for the conflict's outcome, assuring his father their king 'is not beat yet' while 'hold[ing] many great cities' and 'many great houses, like Arnescote'.[42] Hawkesworth had been eager to shoot at a genuine siege-location, and studied several books on sieges, so, inevitably, Arnescote was besieged, providing not only drama, but the perfect opportunity to bring direct experience of warfare on-screen.[43]

Military Action & Engagement on Screen

Cast as Tom after Hawkesworth and Herbert saw him playing a swashbuckling pirate, Bentinck describes his delight at continuing 'earning [his] living with a sword around [his] waist', becoming 'obsessed with the period', reading around and discussing the wars with an *Archers*-colleague living close to Edgehill, and relishing 'doing major sword fights'. This last being risky, multiple minor injuries occurred during the process despite his 'stage fighting [from] drama school' and pirate-experience, the sword-work being professionally choreographed, and his 'train[ing] for days', to hone skills.[44] But despite their titular relevance, and the media's impression the show was essentially '*Upstairs, Downstairs* with swords', there was far more to its portrayal of weapons and warfare than swagger and hand-to-hand combat with swords.[45] The writing team read leading popular and specialist military historians of the period like Maurice Ashley, John Adair, and Peter Young, and recognising weaponry and warfare as 'such a huge subject and so important to us', Hawkesworth recruited Young as historical consultant.[46] A distinguished veteran soldier and military historian at Sandhurst, Young had previously consulted on BBC drama *Churchill and the Generals* (1979).[47] But his great passion was

[41]Mendlesohn, *Creating Memory*, pp. 104-105.
[42]John Hawkesworth, 'A Sea of Dangers', *By The Sword Divided*, 1:7.
[43]MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', pp. 9-10.
[44]Timothy Bentinck, *Being David Archer And Other Unusual Ways of Earning a Living*, (London, Constable, 2017), pp. 77-78, 86-87, 90-91, 130.
[45]Robert Barr, '"Sword" Swashbuckling Saga of Civil War', *News-Press*, 30 March 1986, p. 122.
[46]MERL MS 5126/346 (quote from Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', p. 8).
[47]Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', p. 86.

the Civil War, on which he was considered the 'unrivalled' military expert having advanced knowledge of the warfare considerably by combining his practical knowledge and field-experience with battlefield archaeology. Amongst his many books, he had written the foremost study of Edgehill, and was writing one on Naseby.[48] In 1968 he had founded the Sealed Knot reenactment society, creating a popular and 'accessible' living history organisation, passionate about 'authenticity' but also about education, and talks and demonstrations for audiences as well as the re-enactment itself became a key part of the organisation's events.[49] Preproduction, Young wrote notes on structuring and equipping the armies, and was later on-set to choreograph and 'monitor the authenticity' of the military action shot.[50]

The Sealed Knot themselves were brought in to populate and lend further authenticity to the siege, but throughout the first series much attention was given to description and demonstration of weaponry. The plausibly authentic experience of Tom and his servant, Will Saltmarsh, as veterans of 'the foreign wars' where they acquired significant expertise, is referenced, and one of Will's principal roles is essentially military-interpreter for the audience via explanations to Arnescote's inhabitants. Leading household preparations for anticipated war in Episode 2:1, Will formally demonstrates loading and firing a wheel-lock pistol, talking through the process as he performs it, the camera focused upon the weapon (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Screengrabs from Will Saltmarsh's (Simon Dutton) demonstration of loading and firing a wheel-lock pistol. Episode 1:2. (BBC, 1983).

[48]Alison Michelli, *Commando to Captain-Generall: The Life of Brigadier Peter Young*, (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2007), pp. 222-224, 240-241, 247

[49]*Ibid*. pp. 226-235, 247-248. Allan Boughey, 'Look', *Lichfield Mercury*, 23 September 1983, p. 28.

[50]Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', p. 84.

When Tom departs alongside Rupert, Cropper, Sir Martin, and his neighbour-turned-officer, Charles Pike, discuss equipping the Troop Sir Martin's is raising – according to Young's directions for the writers.[51] Inventorying existing arms, Pike worries about the shortage of swords for the (majority) non-gentry troopers, and having only 'a few', 'ancient' pistols, 'and fowling pieces – not of great use', but Sir Martin, conscious of his men's inexperience, assures, 'a well-aimed fowling piece is better than a mis-aimed musket', and mentions hopes for supplies from royalist headquarters. For protective-wear however, Sir Martin is well-satisfied with 'the burgonets lately found in our armoury', retorting to Cropper's assumption the antique helmets will no longer be fit-for-purpose that 'our forbears'' arms will actually make them more easily 'recognisable'. They later indeed prove both 'distinctive' and effective (Figure 3).[52]

Figure 3: English-made 'Burgonet' (c.1575). Likely of a similar period to those antique ones issued to Lacey's Troop in 1642. [53]

[51]MERL MS 5126/346, Peter Young, 'Notes on Sir Martin Lacey's Troop of Horse, 7 December 1982', pp. 1-4.
[52]Alfred Shaughnessy, 'The Sound of Drums', *By The Sword Divided*, 1:3.
[53]Royal Armouries, UK. 'Popular across sixteenth-century Europe, the style had a distinctive comb running front to back across the top, fixed peak above the face, and hinged cheek-plates.' ©Royal Armouries.

Preparing for siege at Arnescote, Skinner, previously 'reported slain at Cropredy Bridge', is recognised as a friend approaching via 'one of our old burgonets on his head'. Once inside, Skinner remarks how lucky it was 'our troop wore burgonet[s]…sav[ing his] life' when he was hit over the head after being 'unhorsed' at Cropredy.[54]

Troop structure is also conveyed during the preparations, in Jackman's roll-call, and when Lucinda excitedly relays details to Anne. Showing off the Troop's flag, Lucinda explains, both it and its bearer, Peter Crane, are called 'a cornet'. In training, Pike draws the Troop's attention to their 'colour', 'carried at all times on parade and into battle by Cornet Crane' as a distinctive unit rallying-point.[55] Later, Crane *is* repeatedly seen fighting in the background still carrying it. The flag (specially designed by Young) is also flown at the castle while held by the Laceys.[56] When the returned-Troop ensconces as Arnescote's garrison, the gates firmly shut 'to all but friends', they begin flying beneath their colour, a *Bloody Flag* 'of defiance' to emphasise firm resolve of cause and 'readiness' for siege (See Figure 4).[57]

Figure 4: Screengrab of the Lacey Flag designed by Peter Young. Shown flying above the so-called 'Bloody' red flag of defiance at Arnescote Castle. (*By The Sword Divided*, BBC, 1983).

[54]Alfred Shaughnessy, 'Outrageous Fortune', *By The Sword Divided*, 1:6.
[55]Shaughnessy, 'Sound of Drums'.
[56]Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', p. 89.
[57]Baron, 'Edge of the Sword'.

This combination of Young's Lacey flag with red flag below was also used in publicity shots next to Julian Glover dressed as Sir Martin.[58] The writers, having read about them in Lewis Winstock's *Songs and Marches of the Roundheads and Cavaliers*, consolidated characterisations of Tom and Will's expertise as Siege of Breda (1637) veterans through their use and explanation of '*Swedish Feathers*', spiked stakes angled to impale oncoming cavalry. Will prepares these while awaiting reinforcements at Arnescote, and later joins the Troop in installing them in the defensive trenches dug around the castle, as Tom explains to his father that the renowned warrior king, 'Old Gustavus Adolphus first used them in the Low Countries' (See Figures 5 & 6).[59]

Figure 5: Will Saltmarsh prepares and explains 'Swedish Feathers'.[60]

[58]Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', p. 85.
[59]MERL MS 5126/346. Lewis Winstock, *Songs and Marches of the Roundheads and Cavaliers*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1971), p. 15. Baron, 'Edge of the Sword'. Shaughnessy, 'Outrageous Fortune'.
[60]Screengrab from Episode 1:5. (BBC, 1983).

Figure 6: Walter Jackman (Edward Peel) supervises installing 'Swedish Feathers' in the defensive trench dug around Arnescote's walls.[61]

The besieging Roundheads' preparations were also covered, their leaders shown studying castle plans, seeking intelligence on supply and storage inside, and ultimately successfully targeting the grain and powder store. Assessing the castle wall before initiating bombardment, they conclude they need the 'big guns', 'demi-cannon or culverin at least!', and lament both Cromwell being 'greedy with his guns', and the national multitude of places 'to reduce' diverting the required artillery.[62] As well as many detailed shots of the discharge of weapons during the siege action itself, a demonstration of the mounting, firing, and discharge of a petard on the castle's main gates represents the breakthrough moment for the Roundheads, allowing them finally to breach the walls which the outnumbered garrison had hitherto managed to keep at bay. Once fallen, Arnescote is sequestrated and centrally-ordered slighted, in keeping with Hawkesworth's personally-informed, well-advertised embrace of Cromwell's folkloric destructive reputation. However, to preserve the location, and the Arnescote household narrative, into the second series, it is rescued when John purchases the castle and the Fletchers inhabit it, retaining surviving servants, until it is returned to Tom in 'Restoration'.

[61]Screengrab from Episode 1:6. (BBC, 1983).
[62]Hawkesworth, 'Sea of Dangers'.

Bentinck recalled the set's authentic atmosphere and 'smell' created by the re-enactors, who also volunteered experienced riders for cavalry action beyond the average capabilities of the regular cast. The reenactors', and particularly Young's, involvement was well-publicised to promote the show's authentic credentials, while another military historian-cum-reenactor, John Adair, launched a new book of 'eye-witness' accounts of the wars (also called 'By the Sword Divided'), to coincide with the series.[63] Also much-mentioned in the press, was the vast number of arms collected, and shots fired on set, in the spirit of conveying the brutality of war, and there were even complaints about the level of violence shown.[64] Competency in warfare was enhanced by other expert teachers and choreographers, for swords, and for horseback manoeuvres. While absolute realism was impossible to achieve, some of the action's amateurism Young judged 'authentic' in portraying what he described as the 'most disorderly of wars', and visually, though 'fibreglass' armour pieces were used, the general lack of armour was in-keeping with the narrative's running-theme of supply issues, themselves reflective of the wartime situation.[65] Partly these were also aesthetic choices however, for the purposes of design, recognition, characterisation, and practical mobility. Young's advice that 'Sir Martin might have a full cuirassier armour in 1642' was clearly decided against in favour of displaying him in plumed hat and fine fabrics of more stereotypical cavalier dress.[66]

Civilians at War

Hawkesworth 'hoped' to depict 'different attitudes on both sides …. as fairly as possible', and there was a strong sense of the general tragedy of (and distaste for) Englishmen at war with each other, but there also runs throughout a sense of the inherent division of men by type into natural 'soldiers', and those ill-suited to military life and/or command.[67] Though clearly epitomised by frequently-highlighted differences between brothers-in-law Tom and John, neither character-type is wholly plauded or vilified, and both can be found across both cavalier/roundhead and class divides. This is essential to the drama's overall narrative drive, that the war impinges on everyday life for everyone, and also tapped into the popular social history previously so successful in *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Mendlesohn notes that two world wars 'accelerated' interest towards 'history from below', the day-to-day life of soldiers, and everyday

[63]Bentinck, *Being David Archer*, p. 89. *Harborough Mail*, 27 October 1983, p. 21.
[64]Ron Knox, 'TV Talk', *Press and Journal*, 22 October 1983, p. 9; *Hull Daily Mail*, 15 October 1983, p. 3; 'Point of View', *Sandwell Evening Mail*, 10 December 1983, p. 15.
[65]Bentinck, *Being David Archer*, p. 89-90. Peter McGarry, 'Teleview', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 7 December 1983, p.8. Crace, 'Cavalier Attitudes', p. 84. Phil Riley, 'TV Topics', *Herald Express*, 15 October 1983, p. 16.
[66]MERL MS 5126/346, Young, 'Notes' p. 3.
[67]MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', p. 9.

'Home Front' experience of war, including women's, interest that increasingly dominated post-war historical fictions such as Daphne Du Maurier's *The King's General* (1946), which made a strong impression on Hawkesworth who recommended it on the writers' bibliography.[68]

Although 'Upstairs' characters dominate the series, several of the servants are given significant screentime, and there is a 'Downstairs' element to the family-divided motif for Will whose brother Sam fights (and storms Arnescote) for Parliament. Castle kitchen-talk is often used to simplify and explain the series' complex events and politics, although, in keeping with contemporary debates about the political nature of the recent Falklands War, it is periodically suggested that the lower classes have little understanding of the conflict's ideologies but are merely followers, conscripts, and/or victims of the elite classes on both sides. Life at Arnescote revolves around strong feudal feeling, with Cropper, Skinner, and also blacksmith, Matthew Saltmarsh, the latest generation in their families to serve the Laceys, and an overwhelming impression that Sir Martin's servants and tenants should unquestioningly commit to Royalism out of personal fealty. This is writ-large in Sir Martin's own sense of obligation to serve the king. Much of the drama of the series is found in the disruption of this feudal hierarchy.

More politically and socially radical voices on *Upstairs, Downstairs*, had been moderated by dominant editorial vision, notably Hawkesworth's and Shaughnessy's, and, interestingly, although Hawkesworth's previous series had both employed female writers, none were brought over to *By The Sword*.[69] That said, and despite traditional military history being seen as a very masculine domain, several reviews of the series felt that Hawkesworth was well-attuned and responsive to the 'changing attitudes' of the time, 'display[ing] a concern about the status accorded women that would have been inconceivable in the earlier series' and allowing 'strong' leading female characters, their actions, and the dynamics of their '*relationships*', 'equal' 'prominence' to the 'men and their disputes and actions'.[70] The 'division' between the sisters, Anne and Lucinda is one of the most consistently central to the drama because it is domestic, simultaneously both a more pronounced, and less stringently enforced, one for Anne than that with her twin-brother, located *at* Arnescote as the narrative epicentre because of their more stable residence there.

[68]Mendlesohn, Creating Memory, pp. 34-42; MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', pp. 3, 11.
[69]Wheatley, 'Rooms Within Rooms', p. 151.
[70]Poole, 'Revolutionary Saga'. Margaret Kitchen, 'A History Lesson', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 6 March 1985, p. 6

The home environment becoming very much a female one, with the men away at the wars was of course by the 1980s a common trope of war-fiction, and the sense of their lives veering between the uncertainty of being removed from the action (Lucinda in particular spends a lot of hours waiting for news of battles), being beset by the hardships of a society and economy at war, and direct exposure to personal danger, provides a key atmospheric aesthetic in keeping with the increasingly dominant 'Home Front' interpretations of wartime. Significantly, though it never becomes quite the makeshift military 'hospital' Hawkesworth earlier imagined, and which many aristocratic homes became during twentieth-century conflict, there are references to early modern medical practices, and the expectation that women will need to learn wound-care, and when Sir Martin returns from Edgehill, he is treated by his household women rather than the local doctor.[71]

Hand-in-hand with this interpretation of war's cultural totality come impressions of it as democratic universal experience, heightened by the setting-specificity of having the battlefields actually on English soil, domesticity even further emphasised when Arnescote is besieged. Wartime camaraderie has been seen as culturally diminishing class barriers in twentieth-century Britain.[72] This is reflected in the series, but although demarcation of feudal status is clearly preserved, the household dynamic also reflects Hawkesworth's impression of the period more generally, that class relations predated Victorian/Edwardian Britain's 'fixed formalities' and interrelationships 'were much more direct and free and easy in Charles I's day'.[73] Cropper and Margaret move freely between family and servants, and Susan, though technically family, is generally placed under their authority and deployed to laundry-work with the lowest-ranking servants as punishment for disloyalty. When hardship comes to the house, family and servants (all ranks) are seen suffering or facing them together. This is clearest during the siege, in preparation for which 'all the outlying people', Arnescote's estate workers and tenants, complete with any food/livestock resources they might have, are brought 'in behind the [Castle] walls' to join the main household and garrison to resist siege as one unit.[74]

Siege-time depicts all working alongside each other, social barriers abandoned as home becomes battlefield. Lucinda's role as a gentlewoman is contradicted by her dirtied, dishevelled appearance, she loads muskets for the defenders, and works with the maids to carry boiling water and bricks to the battlements before throwing them onto Roundheads below. The kitchen, symbol of domesticity so closely associated with

[71]MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', Appendix of preliminary episode-outlines, p. 6
[72]Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, pp. 396-397.
[73]MERL MS 5126/346, Hawkesworth, 'Notes and Outlines', p. 4.
[74]Hawkesworth, 'Sea of Dangers'.

Hawkesworth's period drama is transformed into a workshop, as cook, Mrs Dumfry, and old retainer/'wise-woman', 'Minty', meltdown roofing-lead for Matthew Saltmarsh to turn into ammunition (see Figure 7). The awful absurdity of this repurposing of the homely Kitchen is underlined when, to Margaret's chevying for 'more shot', Mrs Dumfry retorts the process is 'dangerous work', 'not like making partridge pie'. Minty reminds that product as well as process differs from pie, being capable of inflicting 'gross wound[s]'. Meanwhile, demonstrating the manufacturing process, 'Living History'-style, Matthew underlines the skill-level required, remarking that they 'must be perfect spheres[…]to fit the barrels' (See Figure 8).[75]

Figure 7: Making bullets in the Arnescote kitchen.[76] Mrs Dumfry (Claire Davenport), Minty (Eileen Way), and the blacksmith, Matthew Saltmarsh (Frank Mills) making bullets in the familiar set of the Arnescote Castle kitchen, a visual reminder of the war's incursion on everyday domestic life.

[75]John Hawkesworth, 'Ring of Fire', *By The Sword Divided* (BBC, 1983), 1:8.
[76]Screengrab from Episode 1:8. (BBC, 1983).

Figure 8: Minty reflects on the effectiveness of bullets while Matthew Saltmarsh demonstrates the technicalities of making them.[77]

Beyond Arnescote, the series also demonstrates the war's impact on the civilians, mostly women, of Swinford, vulnerable in their own homes to passing soldiers' raping, pillaging and looting, and that this mix of civilian with military life applies also to the traditional battlefield as well as the besieged homestead is demonstrated by reference to adaptation of civilian skills and experience to the Troop's structure. Sam Saltmarsh, blacksmith's son and apprentice is drafted as Troop-farrier to in 1642, and Moresby the huntsman becomes Trumpeter. Skinner's pre-war gamekeeping experience manifested in skilled wartime marksmanship. Charles I's grand courtiers are mostly depicted ill-suited for forced-transposition to military-commanders, reluctant to yield authority to the more-experienced Rupert to pragmatically serve the war effort. Contrastingly, on the other side, although the viewers do not meet Cromwell until Series Two, his name increasingly crops up as Series One progresses, and Roundhead momentum gathers thanks to the (much reported) professionalised discipline of the New Model Army. This reflects not only the inflation of Cromwell's role in cultural memory of the civil war, but also a modern sense of meritocratic advancement over

[77]Screengrab from Episode 1:8. (BBC, 1983).

hereditary privilege, while coming divisions between Parliament and Army, and the military and ordinary people in the 1650s are foreshadowed.

Though small details in depicting brutalities and politics of warfare were obviously influenced by contemporary situations in the Falklands and Northern Ireland, Hawkesworth's long-nursed ambitions for the project, his assessment of the period's importance and the nature of his research into it suggest he saw *By The Sword* as a vehicle for conveying history rather than contemporary politics. His approach to the drama, and the background and resources he drew on to bring the project to screen also suggest that the primary creative aim was to recreate the Civil War via a tried-and-tested formula Sunday-night period television. Scholars have defined such drama as 'visually captivating' but 'ultimately conservative', a 'cosy', 'sanitised', 'mono-cultural' vision of history preoccupied with ideas about 'Englishness and nationhood' ever-intertwined with the aristocracy, and essentially 'escapist, feel good television'.[78] Certainly, encouraged by new opportunities for location filming, this was true of expectations for it in the 1980s, despite acknowledgement, even hope, that socially-broader histories might be introduced.

The seventeenth century did have some 'escapist' form in twentieth-century screen culture as 'swashbuckling', adventure-romance, however, preferencing 'stylization rather than realism, fictional adventure and not historical fact', such an approach was not wholly compatible with Hawkesworth's commitment to historical research and period immersion.[79] While Hawkesworth's Edwardian dramas had been great successes, applying his formula to a more chronologically-remote, and less culturally-familiar period was clearly less generically effective, and while the format of *Upstairs, Downstairs* has been revisited in more recent times, *By The Sword* remains a unique exploration of the English Civil War in Sunday-night television. Socio-political divisiveness and physical brutality of civil war, cultural expectations regarding the nature and commemoration of war, and commitment to laboured historical detail (enhanced, practically and impressionistically, by the involvement of the re-enactors, known for their educational and commemorative ethos) rendered the drama 'worthy' and prestigious, but lacked the traditional coziness and escapism of the genre.[80]

[78]Byrne, *Edwardians on Screen*, pp. 8-13, 37, 64, 117, 149.
[79]Jeffrey Richards, *Swordsmen of the Screen: From Douglas Fairbanks to Michael York*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1-4.
[80]Sarah Betts, "'…Where Liberty Was Fought For": Civil War Memorials in England' in Frank Jacob and Kenneth Pearl (ed), *War and Memorials: The Age of Nationalism and the Great War*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2019), pp. 67-92; McGarry, 'Teleview'.

Attempting to cover fully the eventful two decades of conflict, capitalise on familiar iconography yet also educate the public about a neglected but significant era in history, create drama and narrative momentum whilst attempting to be even-handed, and explain complex, controversial political ideologies, was inevitably ambitious within a popular and accessible format laden with such strong associations and expectations. When, almost thirty years later, the wars were again transformed into multi-series primetime drama, the offering was deemed 'revisionist', made for edgier Channel 4, and broadcast in a midweek post-watershed slot, but publicity once more cited neglect of the Civil Wars in popular culture.[81] But the wars' depiction, particularly in television drama, is itself neglected, and *By The Sword Divided*, an extended exploration created during a golden age of period drama by the man with the apparent golden touch for the genre, is long-overdue scholarly examination.

[81]De Groot, "'Welcome to Babylon'" pp. 75-76.