THE NORMANS IN IRELAND

In Norman times Ireland was not a united country. It was a collection of smaller kingdoms, each with its own King and a High King who ruled over the lesser kings. The High King was chosen for his wealth and his skill as a warrior and leader. Kings often fought with each other and with the High King.

In 1166 Diarmuit MacMurchada, King of Lenister had his land and titles taken from him by Ruaidri ua Conchobair, High King of Ireland. He looked to Henry II of England for help. King Henry agreed that Diarmuit could ask any of his Norman Lords for help, as he saw it as an opportunity to gain power and influence in Ireland.

MacMurchada formed an alliance with Richard Fitz Gilbert de Clar, 2nd Earl of Pembroke in Wales (Strongbow). He offered him land and his daughter Aoife as Strongbow's wife.

The Norman army arrived in Wexford in 1169 and travelled through the country, raiding as they went. At Tara they attempted to remove Conchobair as High King, but failed to do so. MacMurchada and Conchobair agreed a truce but MacMurchda secretly called on Strongbow to come and help. Strongbow arrived with a large army and weapons in 1170.

Henry at Waterford

The Norman armies were better armed and supplied than the Irish and succeeded in taking land from the native Irish. On Diarmuit MacMurchada's death Strongbow became King of Lenister.

ORIGINS OF CLONMEL

In the following years more and more Normans travelled from England to Ireland and established themselves as land owners.
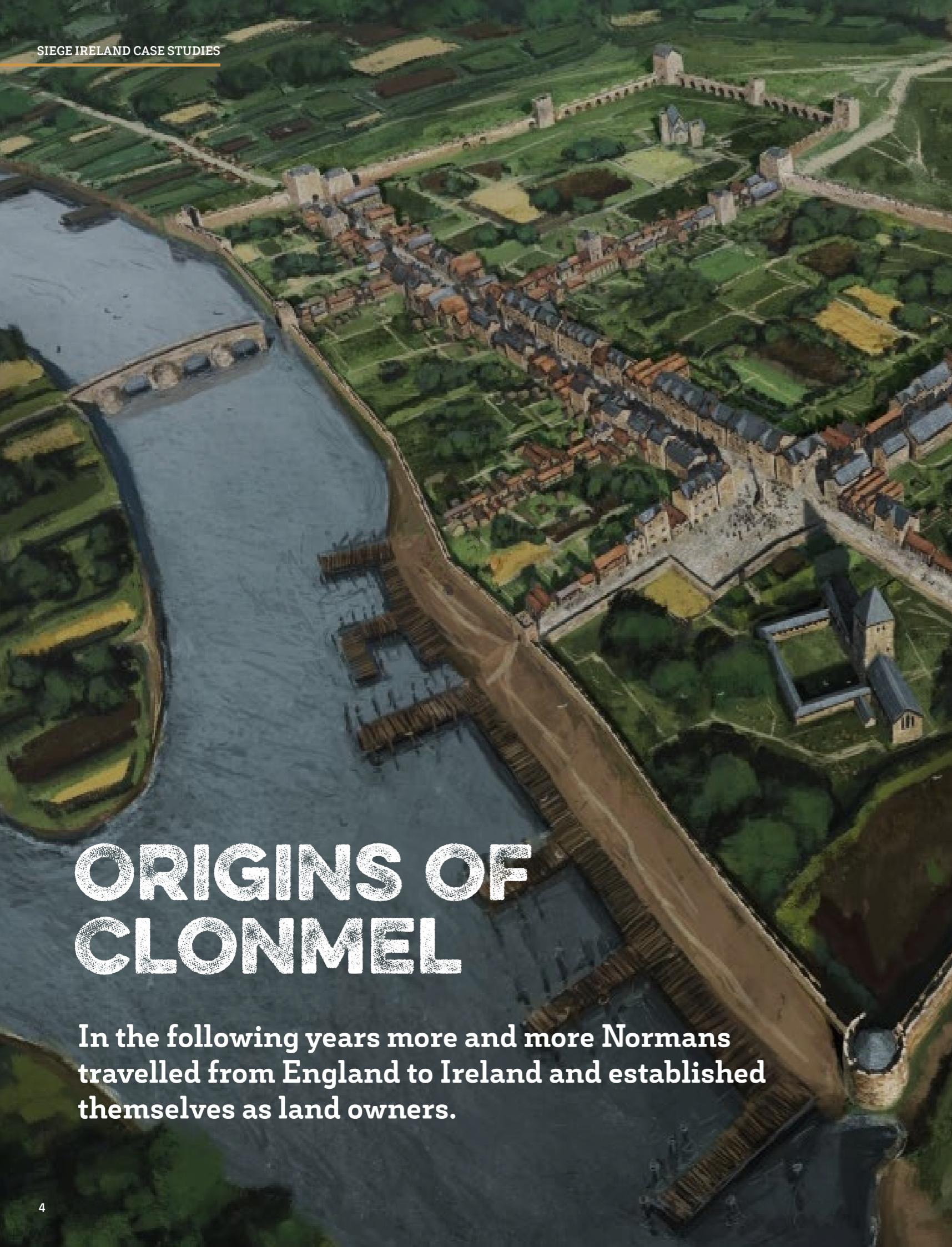
By 1300 the Normans controlled most of the land in Ireland. Many had intermarried and set up home and business here.

Towns started to develop such as Clonmel. These towns were often raided by the native Irish for food, money and animals. The townspeople built walls around the towns to protect themselves from such raids.

In 1298 Otho de Grandison, Lord of the Manor of Clonmel was given a murage grant, which allowed him tax goods sold in the town, in order to raise money for building a town wall. The walls of Clonmel took many years to build. They were made of limestone.

The walled town of Clonmel was almost rectangular in plan, but with a small additional rectangle at the northwest corner, around St Mary's parish church. The medieval main street (present O'Connell Street/ Mitchell Street) overlooked the river Suir on the south side of the rectangle, and the main medieval cross street (Gladstone Street/Sarsfield Street) was close to the east side.

There were five gates in the medieval wall. The present West Gate, erected in 1831, stands on the site of the original gate. The North Gate probably stood at the junction of Morton Street and Gladstone Street while the East Gate, was at the intersection of Emmet Street, Dowd's Lane, Parnell Street and Mitchel Street. The South Gate was at the end of the present Bridge Street and the Watergate was at the bottom of Sarsfield Street.
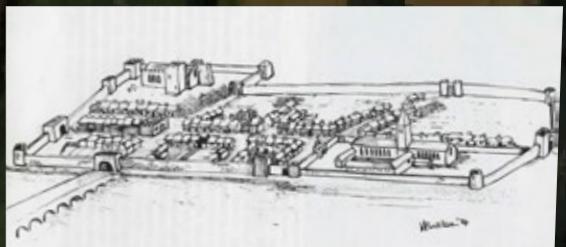
The area outside of the town walls where the native Irish lived was known as Irish town and many towns in Ireland still have an area known as Irishtown today.

In the second half of the 18th Century and the first half of the 19th Century Clonmel experienced an industrial revolution, which caused the town to expand and a new Quay, mills and warehouses to be built. The South Wall was demolished to make space for these new developments and to allow access to the river. Over the years the other walls suffered a similar fate.

DERRY

THE PLANTATION OF ULSTER

The Plantation of Ulster was the organised colonisation of the province of Ulster in Ireland by the people from Great Britain during the reign of King James I.

In the summer of 1608 a survey had been carried out on the six escheated counties which had been deemed to be forfeit to the Crown by the so-called 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607. The new plan to deal with all this land, and simultaneously to 'pacify' and 'civilise' Ulster, was 'plantation' or colonisation; the same policy was being used to exploit the land and resources of the New World in the Americas. Large numbers of 'loyal' (mainly Protestant) English and Scottish settlers were to be introduced to Ulster to farm the land and secure it for Crown interests.

King James I

Most of the colonists came from Scotland and England. A small private plantation by wealthy landowners had begun in 1606, but the official plantation began in 1609. Most of the land colonised was forfeited from the native Gaelic chiefs, many of whom had fled Ireland for mainland Europe in 1607 following the Nine Years' War against English rule in Ireland. The official plantation comprised an estimated half a million acres (2,000 km) of arable land in the present-day counties of Armagh, Cavan, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Donegal and Londonderry. Land in counties Antrim, Down and Monaghan was privately colonised with the king's support.

Hugh O'Neill, 2nd Earl of Tyrone

This territory was to be based on the existing county of Coleraine with a few smaller areas added including a strip of land on the west bank of the river Foyle, based on the ancient settlement of Derry.

Four inspectors from the City of London arrived in Ulster on 22 August 1609 and spent a month touring the territory intended for them. After their return to London, they reported favourably on what they had seen. Immediately, the plantation began to be organised and investment funds called in from the separate companies. In 1610 about 130 stonemasons and carpenters were sent over from London to begin building the new city. Although progress was exceptionally slow, on 29th March 1613 the royal seal was attached to the document known as the Charter of London-Derry, which changed the name of the city from Derry to Londonderry and set up a local municipal corporation. This charter gave the corporation the power to collect customs and tolls on imports and devote the proceeds of which to the maintenance of the walls and gates of the city. However the corporation did not own the land on which the city stood; this belonged to the Honourable the Irish Society, essentially a subordinate subcommittee of the City of London.

In August 1613, two commissioners, George Smithes and *Matthias Springham*, arrived from the City of London to expedite the building of the city walls and with assistance from 11 military officers:

'viewed and trod out the ground at the Derry for the fortification there'

It wasn't until March 1619 that one of the King's inspectors of fortifications in Ireland, Captain Nicholas Pynnar was able to certify the Derry Walls as being complete:

The City of London-Derry is encompassed about with a very Strong Wall, excellently made and neatly wrought; being all of good Lime and Stone; the Circuit whereof is 283 Perches and 2/3, at 18 feet to the Perch; besides the four gates which contain 84 feet; and in every Place of the Wall it is 24 feet high, and six feet thick. The gates are all battlemented, but to two of them there is no going up, so that they serve no great use; neither have they made any Leaves for their Gates; but make two Draw-Bridges serve for two of them, and two Portcullices for the other two. The Bullwarks are very large and good, being in number nine; besides two half Bullwarks ; and for four of them there may be four Cannons, or other great Pieces; the rest are not all out so large, but wanteth very little. The Rampart within the City is 12 feet thick of Earth; all things are very well and substantially done, saving there wanteth a House for the Soldiers to watch in, and a Centinell House for the Soldiers to stand in, in the Night, to defend them from the Weather, which is most extreme in these Parts. Since the last Survey i.e. that made by Sir Josias Bodley, there is built a School, which is 67 feet in length, and 25in breadth, with two other Small Houses. Other building there is not any within the City. The whole number of Houses within the City is 92, and in them there are 102 Families, which are far too few a number for the Defence of such a Circuit, they being scarce able to man one of the Bullwarks; neither is there room enough to set up a 100 Houses more, unless they will make them as little as the first, and name each Room for a House.

Going into the Siege of 1649, Derry was very much a new city built to a plan influenced by the latest European thinking on urban and military design. Its streets were laid out on a grid pattern, emanating from a central square and exiting at four defended gates. Its walls had eight angled bastions, designed to give clear fields of fire along the whole length of the wall. The stone walls were backed by compacted earth that acted as a shock absorber against cannon fire.

ORIGINS OF LONDON-DERRY

The wealthy merchants of the City of London (organised as trade and craft companies) were persuaded into sponsoring one of the plantation areas.

WHAT WERE THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS?

The Wars of the Three Kingdoms, formed an intertwined series of conflicts that took place in England, Ireland and Scotland between 1639 and 1651.

One of these conflicts was the English Civil War which included the execution of the kingdoms' monarch, Charles I, by the English parliament in 1649 and was settled by the English Restoration of the monarchy with Charles II, in 1660. In Ireland the wars included the the Irish Rebellion of 1641, Confederate Ireland, 1642-49 and the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland in 1649 (collectively the Eleven Years War or Irish Confederate Wars).

The wars were the outcome of tensions over religious and civil issues. Religious disputes centred on whether religion was to be dictated by the monarch or the choice of the individual, with many people feeling that they ought to have freedom of religion. The related civil questions were to what extent the king's rule was constrained by parliaments—in particular his right to raise taxes and armed forces without consent. Furthermore, the wars also had an element of national conflict, as Ireland and Scotland rebelled against England's primacy within the Three Kingdoms.

Alienated by English Protestant domination and frightened by the rhetoric of the English and Scottish Parliaments, a small group of Irish conspirators launched the Irish Rebellion of 1641, ostensibly in support of the "King's Rights". The rising featured widespread assaults on the Protestant communities in Ireland, sometimes culminating in massacres. Rumours spread in England and Scotland that the killings had the king's sanction and that this foreshadowed their own fate if the king's Irish troops landed in Britain. As a result, the English Parliament refused to pay for a royal army to put down the rebellion in Ireland and instead raised their own armed forces. The king did likewise, rallying those Royalists (some of them members of Parliament) who believed that loyalty to the legitimate king outweighed other important political principles.

In Ireland, the rebel Irish Catholics formed their own government—Confederate Ireland—with the intention of helping the Royalists in return for religious toleration and political autonomy. Troops from England and Scotland fought in Ireland, and Irish Confederate troops mounted an expedition to Scotland in 1644, sparking the Scottish Civil War.

In Ireland and Scotland, the execution of King Charles I in January 1649 caused the warring parties in those two kingdoms to unite and recognise Charles II as king of Great Britain and Ireland.

In May 1649, Derry, held by the Parliamentarians, was besieged in May 1649 by forces allied to the Royalist cause.'

To deal with the threat that the two kingdoms posed to the English Commonwealth, the Rump Parliament sent a parliamentary army under Cromwell to invade and subdue Ireland. Cromwell and his army proceeded to do this, landing shortly after the Siege of Dublin had been abandoned following the Battle of Rathmines. The Siege of Clonmel took place in 1650. At the end of May 1650 Cromwell left Ireland (leaving the English army in Ireland to continue the conquest).

However, the issues that had caused the wars—religion, the power of Parliament and the relationship between the three kingdoms—remained unresolved, only postponed to re-emerge as matters fought over again in the Jacobite -Williamite War of 1688-90.

TYPES OF SIEGES DURING THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

The military history of Western Europe in the 17th century is dominated by the Thirty Years War, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, and the wars of Louis XIV. The common perception of these conflicts is of big battles: cavalry charges on the wings whilst in the centre, massed infantry formations slugging it out. Yet the reality is rather different as it was the siege rather than the set-piece battle which dominated 17th century warfare.

The coup de main

The coup de main, where surprise was used.

The Smash and Grab

The 'smash and grab', where an assault was launched after a preliminary bombardment, a preferred tactic of the New Model Army. Here, just the threat of the assault was often enough to persuade the garrison to surrender.

The blockade

The blockade, which was a longer-lasting affair, and the besieger invested the place of strength, preventing communication and offensive activities by the garrison. This was the preferred option by an attacker unwilling (or unable) to attempt an assault and was used (without much success) by the Royalists at Derry.

Depiction of various siege machines in the mid-16th century

Investiture

Finally, and quite uncommon was the complete investiture, where a circumvallation of rampart and ditch, fort and battery would be constructed around the entire town, in so doing cutting it off from the outside world.

WHAT IS A SIEGE?

Sieges occur when a walled town or castle is surrounded by an enemy army and refuses to surrender, preferring to hold out rather than risk being plundered. It is much easier to defend a walled town or castle with only a few men than it is to attack with five times as many.

Sieges can last a very long time depending on the location of the besieged town/castle, the amount of fresh food and water inside, the numbers of soldiers defending, and the readiness of the defences, i.e. good walls, artillery.

But it also depends on the food and water of the besieging army, their equipment to conduct the siege, the number of soldiers in the army, and most importantly the time of year. Most armies in the Middle Ages did not fight in winter, and so if a town or castle could hold out long enough, the cold weather would usually force the enemies to lift the siege. As a result most sieges tended to end in failure with the besieging army retreating.

This gradually changed with the coming of gun powder from the Far East, which allowed armies to develop cannon which could fire balls of solid iron or stone which could knock down stone walls. These were very expensive however and a lot were needed to make an impact.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PEOPLE INSIDE?

Sieges could last for just a short few days or could go on for months at a time, depending on the willingness of both sides to wait. During a siege supplies could run low, very fast and had to be rationed. It was not easy to replace them due to the enemy surrounding the town/castle. Sometimes however if a town was settled on a river supplies could be brought in on boats and ships but this was very dangerous and risked failure. However it was equally difficult for the enemy to sail into a town or castle by a river.

If food, weapons or equipment ran out then the settlement would be forced to surrender, which could lead to the town being plundered and the citizens robbed by the invaders, though this did not always happen.

A long siege could also lead to the spread of disease in the settlement due to the high number of people hiding there, and the lack of clean clothes, water and food. However this could also happen to the besieging army which had to forage for their own food and could be forced to move if their own food supplies couldn't be maintained.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WALLS FALL?

Depending on the size and bravery of the garrison, the besieged settlement might be able to hold out even after some of its walls have fallen.

Usually however the settlement would be overrun, pillaged and looted by the attackers for not surrendering at the beginning.

However a negotiation was also possible. Remember Clonmel was not sacked by Cromwell even after the walls had been breached. The bravery of the defenders had earned them Cromwell's respect and the Mayor of the town was able to negotiate the peaceful handover of the town to Cromwell's forces.

Late 16th-century illustration of cannon with gabions

WEAPONS USED DURING THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

The following weapons were used by soldiers in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms

The Mortar

This device is easy to manoeuvre and can be used by one man alone. An explosive shell is fired high into the air and explodes on impact. Although it was difficult to aim, this weapon was the most destructive of those used.

The Cannon

The cannon were very heavy and difficult to move. The largest needed a team of 16 horses to move them. More commonly, smaller cannon were used but even these required at least 4 men to move them. For this reason they had to be put into position before a battle began. The missiles fired from the cannon were usually balls of iron, but sometimes stones were used. After the cannon had been fired the soldiers operating it had to go through a strict procedure of cleaning, loading the weapon and loading the gunpowder before it could be fired again. Aiming was difficult and the cannon were more effective as a means of instilling fear into the enemy than actually causing damage.

The Musket

There were two types of musket; the matchlock and the flintlock, which could be as long as five feet and had a firing range of up to 300 yards. They were both loaded in the same way; gunpowder was poured into the barrel and packed in hard with a stick. Then the lead ball would be put in followed by wadding to hold the ball in place.

To fire the matchlock, the most common type of musket, the soldier would empty gunpowder into a pan and cover it to protect it. He would then press a lighted piece of flax into a metal trigger called the serpent. When the gun was fired the lighted flax in the serpent would come down into the pan and light the gunpowder. The flame from this would then enter the barrel of the gun and ignite the gunpowder that had been poured into it and the lead ball would be fired.

To fire the flintlock was slightly easier but more expensive. The pan would be filled in the same way but the serpent contained a piece of flint which, when it struck the pan, would produce a spark which would ignite the gunpowder.

Both weapons were dangerous and clumsy to use. Some of the longer muskets needed a rest to balance the barrel on because they were too heavy to hold. They were impossible to reload quickly and were most effective when a group of musketeers fired a volley of shots at the enemy.

The Pike

The Pike was one of the most commonly used weapons on the battlefield. The pike was a long wooden shaft with a steel point on the end. They were cheap to make, soldiers required very little training to use them and they could be very effective especially when used in a group. Pikes were supposed to be sixteen feet in length but often soldiers sawed a few feet off the ends to make them easier to carry.

The Pikemen often formed the front line of an army. Operating together they had to lower their pikes to prevent a cavalry charge from breaking the ranks. The cavalrymen's horses would be injured by the pike and would fall to the ground unseating his rider who would then be an easy target for the musketmen or for the sword. If the army was surrounded then the pikemen would form a circle and lower or raise their pikes to provide a 'hedgehog' of cover.

THE CROMWELLIAN CAMPAIGN IN IRELAND

WHY DID CROMWELL COME TO CLONMEL?

In 1641, there was a rebellion by the native Irish and Old English settlers in Ulster.

They were unhappy at having lost much of their lands and influence to Scottish Presbyterian and English Protestant settlers, as a result of the Plantation of Ulster in 1607. Over the years, their rights to practise Catholicism were increasingly restricted.

In late 1641, they formed the Catholic Confederation of Kilkenny to appeal directly to King Charles I for a pardon for rebelling, for toleration of Catholic religion and equal rights for Catholics, while also swearing allegiance to him. However, King Charles was then fighting the English Civil War (1642-6, 1648-9) against the English Parliament which was opposed to his political and religious policies but the Confederation remained loyal to him. Unfortunately, Charles lost the war and was executed in 1649. The English Parliament under the command of Oliver Cromwell sent an army, The New Model Army, to end the rebellion in Ireland. He arrived here in August of 1649.

The New Model Army (also known as the Roundheads) was created in February 1645 by the English Parliament as it felt that a professional army would be more successful against the king's army. They were know as Roundheads as many of them were strict Puritans and wore their hair closely cropped around the head. Oliver Cromwell was put in charge of the cavalry (Ironsides). The New Model Army was a military force based on a person's ability rather than on your position within society. If you were good enough, you could be an officer in it. One of the leading officers in the New Model Army had been a butcher. Cromwell preferred that the men in the new force were strong believers like himself and many men in the New Model Army did become Puritans who knew that God was on their side. It was not unusual for the men in the New Model Army to sing psalms just before going into battle.

Cromwell was welcomed to Dublin in August 1649 by the English Garrison there. He travelled onto Drogheda, where after a short engagement he took control of the town. Cromwellian soldiers committed cruel atrocities, murdered prisoners and citizens of the town and got a reputation for cruelty which travelled before them throughout the country.

In October the New Model Army took control of Wexford and New Ross. It was now winter and the Cromwellian soldiers were tired from the hard campaign and winter illnesses. They set up winter quarters in Dungarvan, Youghal and East Cork. During this time they repaired their equipment, gathered new supplies of money and materials and new recruits from England. In January 1650 Cromwell started a two pronged approach towards Kilkenny, via Dungarvan and Carrick on Suir and From the other side via Conna, Kilbehenny, Clogheen and onto Fethard. The town of Fethard surrendered to Cromwell without a shot even being fired. Following the surrender of Fethard the Mayor of Cashel arrived to Fethard and handed the keys of the town to Cromwell. Cromwell quickly settled in Cashel and dispatched a force to capture Ardfinnan, Kilcash, Kiltinan and Ballydine – leaving Clonmel without its outposts.

THE SIEGE OF CLONMEL

APRIL-MAY 1650
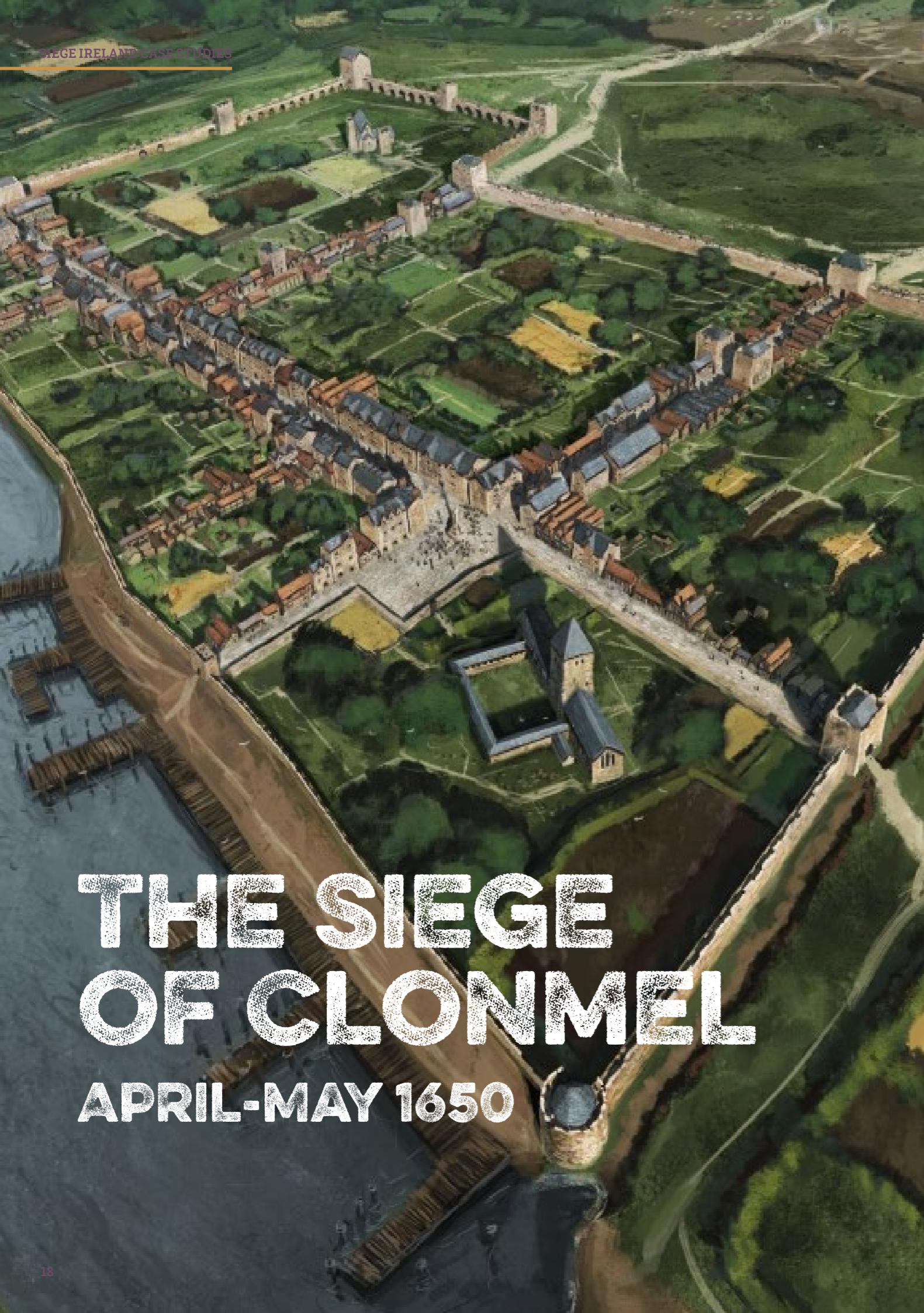
When Cromwell laid siege to Clonmel on 27th April 1650, he was attacking a town with medieval defences i.e. Town Walls.
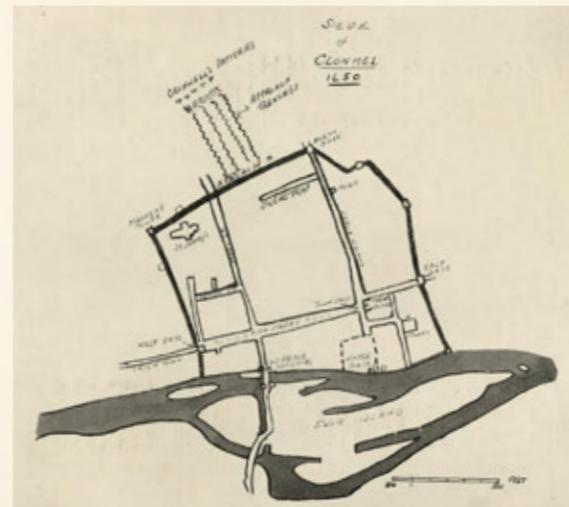

The garrison was commanded by Hugh Dubh O'Neill, son of the famous Hugh the Great O'Neill. It is estimated that there was approx 1600 – 1700 defending the town inside the walls from foot soldiers with muskets and pikes to horsemen and townspeople with limited supplies of ammunition. Cromwell had a force of 8000 which was boosted to 14000 with the arrival of reinforcements, including 600 Horsemen and ample supplies of ammunition Clonmel held Cromwell at bay for three weeks.

Cromwell bombarded the north wall of the town with his cannons and eventually made a breach in the area around present day Bolton Street/Morton Street. O' Neill knew that Cromwell's forces would attempt to enter through the breach. He built a barricade at the western edge of the breach (present day Morton Street) and another at the southern edge of the breach. The barricades were built of stone, bricks and wood. The Clonmel forces were able to hide behind the barricades and engage in close musket fire. As the Cromwellian soldiers entered the breach they were attacked from all sides, suffered losses and quickly retreated. Horsemen were then sent into the breach and suffered similar attack. On attempting to retreat they were prevented from doing so by more oncoming Cromwellian soldiers. (Drawing – Tercentary book)

Cromwell suffered approx 1000 – 2000 loses during the attack. His son in law Henry Ireton remarked that the fighting in and around Clonmel was "the heaviest we ever endured either in England or here".

However, this was only a short term solution as the garrison was badly outnumbered, running out of ammunition and supplies. O' Neill had even set up a foundry in the town to make bullets from jewellery and metal work belonging to the town's people. Rations were short, illness and injury was widespread and with no hope of reinforcements O'Neill led an escape with his soldiers out of the town on the night before the surrender and avoided capture.

The next day the Mayor of the Clonmel, Mayor White met with Cromwell and negotiated surrender. Cromwell agreed that the town would not be looted or its inhabitants killed. The surrender was negotiated while Cromwell thought that the town was still heavily defended. Apparently he was not aware that the garrison had already left and was said to be furious when he discovered the soldiers gone. By the end of May, Cromwell left for England, never to return.
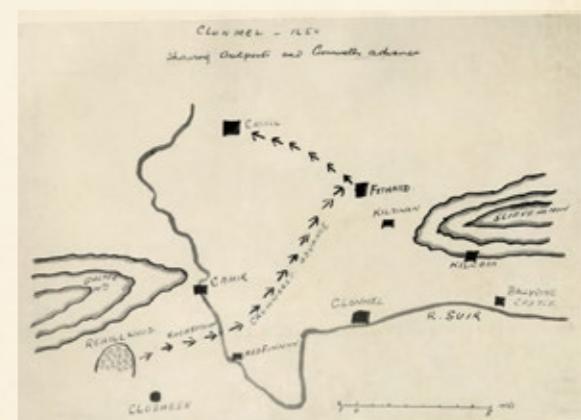
THE SIEGE OF DERRY

MARCH-AUGUST 1649

The 1649 Siege of Derry is often overlooked in favour of the famous Jacobite-Williamite Siege of 1689, but it is just an interesting. It was the first real test of the modern era, bastioned city walls, surveyed as complete by Captain Nicholas Pynnar in 1619.

The 1649 Siege of Derry differs from the 1650 Siege of Clonmel, because it was the Parliamentarians who were inside the city walls and the Royalists who were outside.

Following the execution of Charles I on 30th January 1649, the parliamentarian, Sir Charles Coote seized and held the city of Londonderry and the fort of Culmore. A general sense of revulsion at the regicide brought together former enemies - Presbyterian covenanters and Catholic and Protestant royalists- and this coalition of forces loyal to the newly proclaimed Charles II laid siege to Derry, under the joint command of Sir Alexander Stewart and Lord Montgomery of Ards.

Captain Henry Finch, one of defenders, left the only detailed account of the siege in a short diary.

TIMELINE

December 1648: Sir Charles Coote, Lord President of Connaught seized Derry on behalf of the Parliament and arrested the leading royalists, Sir Robert Stewart, Governor of Derry, and Sir Audley Mervyn, after inviting them to a christening.

After three months' siege there is not one sick or feeble body among us, and now in better condition that the first day of the siege: our greatest want is and will be firing, there being no other firing than old houses, and trees got out of orchards; for we suppose provisions will be plentifully sent us by the Parliament.

Captain Finch

LATE MAR 1649

The besiegers took over the villages and strong points surrounding the city, creating a blockade to stop supplies and reinforcements from reaching the city.

13 MAY 1649

Skirmish at Gallows' Strand; besiegers suffering defeat. 15th May 1649: Skirmish in the Bogside; besiegers suffering defeat.

19 JUNE 1649

Parliamentary ship heading to Dublin captures two boats laden with food supplies and another ship arrives from England with 200 men and supplies of wheat.

29 JULY 1649

Presbyterian soldiers from the Laggan start to abandon the siege, fearing their allies the Royalists under Montgomery. A few days later, Coote's men sallied out from the city into the Laggan, burning villages of Carrigans, Newtowncunningaham, and St Johnston.

30 JAN 1649

Parliament in London executes King Charles I, which is denounced by the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

END APRIL 1649

Coote ordered the houses outside of the walls to be levelled and trees and other obstructions removed, which might have provided cover for enemy forces.

8 JUNE 1649

Overnight the Royalist besiegers built a fort on top of the hill on the road to Ballymagroarty but next day Coote's men destroy it after as skirmish.

26 JULY 1649

Lord Montgomery, now holding a commission from Charles II, returned to Derry with an additional force and called on the city to surrender.

8 AUG 1649

Derry was relieved and O'Neill entered the walled city, where he was entertained by Coote. The siege had lasted 21 weeks.

15 FEB 1649

15th February 1649 The Presbyterian Covenanters in Ulster follow suit, ending their support for the English Parliament, and join in common cause with the Irish Royalists and the Irish Confederates against the authority of the English Parliament in Ulster.

5 MAY 1649

Besieging forces dug trenches and laid close siege to Derry within cannon shot of the city. Attempts to extend these trenches later that month were frustrated by cannon fire from the defenders.

13 JUNE 1649

oote tried to build a new fort at the Windmill, but torn down by the besiegers.

28 JULY 1649

Montgomery and the besiegers attempt an assault against the walls but suffers greater losses than those inside.

7 JULY 1649

Reinforcements, under Colonel George Munroe, arrived for the besiegers. 300-400 cavalry and 1500 foot. They brought with them twelve pieces of field ordnance. However these were probably all very small cannon and were of little use against the city walls. The besiegers had built a gun emplacement with 11 pieces of artillery, called Charles Fort, commanding the river between the city and Culmore Fort, with the purpose of preventing supplies to Derry from arriving by sea. Coote ordered a Parliamentary frigate, which had been operating in Lough Foyle, to attack Charles Fort but with no success.

23 APRIL 1649

Coote led the defenders on a sortie out of Derry and inflicted significant casualties on the besiegers at at Carrigans in County Donegal, killing 16 including two senior officers, capturing eight colours and taking 40 prisoners.

26 MAY 1649

Reinforcements, led by Sir Robert Stewart and Sir Audley Mervyn arrive for the Royalist besiegers and strengthen their resolve to continue the siege.

END JULY 1649

Coote had sought assistance from Owen Roe O'Neill, the commander of a mainly Gaelic Irish and Catholic army in Ulster. O'Neill, with 300 horse and 4000 foot soldiers marched north and successfully drove off the besieging forces.

IMPACT

Finch records only one mention of casualties amongst the besiegers caused by the cannon guns of Derry. In his diary entry of 16th July 1649, he records:

"They Vapoured Very Much All Day, But Approaching Something Too Near, Two Of Their Horses, And One Man Was Kill'd By One Of Our Peeces Of Ordnance, Which Indeed Is All The Hurt I Know They Have Done; Some Fault There Is In The Platforms."

However the strength of the Derry Walls and the quantity of cannon within the city, combined with the aggression and mobility of the defenders, had a deterrent effect, keeping the besieging forces at a respectful distance from the walled city for most of the siege.

ANALYSIS

In the 17th century, all sides brought to the Irish conflict experience gained in the various European theatres of war. Owen Roe O'Neill and his nephew, Hugh Dubh O'Neill, had served with distinction in the Spanish Army of Flanders.

Irish walled towns were used to conflict and were well provisioned to withstand long sieges. However most walled towns in Ireland, like Clonmel, were medieval high stone fortifications, presenting a massive target for enemy artillery and not designed for the mounting of defending cannon. Medieval town walls could be modified to carry cannon by banking earth up against the inside of the walls, providing a platform for the guns. However the outward pressure of the earth ramparts could in fact weaken the walls. Derry was unique with its low walls, giving enemy gunners less to aim at, having a thick bracing of earth behind the stonework to dampen the shocks of missile impacts and with angular bastions providing firm platforms, with a wide field of fire for cannoneers and musketeers.

While both sides in the conflict in Ireland had access to artillery, the Irish Confederates and Royalists had much less cannon that the Parliamentarians. However as the losses suffered by Cromwell's forces at Clonmel demonstrate, strategy can trump firepower.

After the sieges in both Clonmel and Derry were over, the winning Parliamentary forces strengthened their hold on both towns by building citadels within them.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

TIME AND CHRONOLOGY

Using your previous knowledge of history put these events in the correct order.

A. the siege of Clonmel
B. The siege of Derry
C. The famine
D. The invention of the electric light bulb

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Name a significant change that has taken place in Clonmel/Derry since the time of the siege?

CAUSE AND EFFECT

- What motivated Cromwell to attack Clonmel?
- What motivated the Royalists to attack Derry?
- What might the townspeople have learned from this attack?
- In what way might the town have changed after the attack?

USING EVIDENCE

- Is there any first hand evidence in Clonmel/Derry today that it had once been a walled town?
- Where would you see this evidence?

SYNTHESIS AND COMMUNICATION

Write out the five key pieces of information in this text and prepare a PowerPoint presentation for your classmates

EMPATHY

- How might the people of Clonmel/Derry have felt during the siege?
- How did the attacking soldiers feel?
- What hardship would have been felt by the townspeople?
- What impact might the siege have had on health?

TASK

Pretend you were a soldier on either the Cromwellian or Gaelic side. Write an account of the moment the walls fell and the initial storming of the town.

WORDSEARCH

Can you find all the siege words in this wordsearch?

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S R X B S X E L G V P I T W U
R O E A D N L E N N U T U X S
E L T T O I A B S O H E F T F
D G G T N D D M E I C C A R R
D N S E O I F J R A E R Z F E
A A P R C W W G N O V G O O S
L I C I N U G N A E N O E E H
Y A E N L J O M V V D L M X S
T B A G Y N N A R T K S W B I
P Z D R G D T L U P A T A C W
O V F A M I C O P D D C O O Z
W M U M O I T A B E S I E G E
D O G N H I E W A L L S C P M
E D Q H A T H S I A J D W H G
R Z F W U J X A C L S M F W M
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Anglo
Ladders
Powder
Stone
Winter
Cannon
Gun

Powder
Norman
Siege
Tunnel
Walls
Food
Catapult

Starvation
Stone
Armies
Waitout
Beseige
Fresh
Batteringram

WHY DID CROMWELL COME TO IRELAND?

After the 1641 Rebellion those who rebelled against England formed the Catholic Confederation.

This was an organisation that wrote to the King of England, Charles I to remove the harsh laws against the Catholic Irish. However Charles had angered his Parliament in England, leading to what is called the English Civil War in 1642-46 and again in 1648-49. Unfortunately for Charles he lost the war and was executed. In order to stop the Irish rebelling, the Parliament sent Oliver Cromwell to Ireland in August 1649.

The New Model Army (also known as the Roundheads) was created in February 1645 by the English Parliament as it felt that a professional army would be more successful against the king's army. They were know as Roundheads as many of them were strict Puritans and wore their hair closely cropped around the head. Oliver Cromwell was put in charge of the cavalry (Ironsides). The New Model Army was a military force based on a person's ability rather than on your position within society. If you were good enough, you could be an officer in it. One of the leading officers in the New Model Army had been a butcher. Cromwell preferred that the men in the new force were strong believers like himself and many men in the New Model Army did become Puritans who knew that God was on their side. It was not unusual for the men in the New Model Army to sing psalms just before going into battle.

DID YOU KNOW?

By Hook or by Crook - this saying is often used when someone is determined to get something by whatever means necessary, good or bad– it is suggested that the phrase comes from the names of the villages of Hook Head in Wexford and nearby Crooke, in Waterford,. Hook Head and Crooke are on opposite sides of the Waterford channel and Cromwell is reputed to have said that Waterford would fall 'by Hook or by Crooke', that is, by a landing of his army at one of those two places during the siege of the town in 1649/50.

DID YOU KNOW?

Warts and all meaning the whole thing, not concealing the less attractive. This phrase is said to come from Cromwell's instruction to portrait painter (Sir Peter Lely) to paint him as he was, 'warts and all' and not to flatter or exaggerate, as was the custom in portraits of the time. When Cromwell died a wax mould (death mask) was taken of his features as was common at the time. Later copies of this death mask were made and these show the true facial features including warts. Tipperary County Museum's collection holds a copy of Cromwell's death mask.

WHAT IS A SIEGE?

A siege is the name used to describe when a walled town or castle is surrounded by an enemy army and the town refuses to give in. Walled towns were easier to defend from the walls and made it harder for an enemy to get in. They could hold out against an army for weeks if they had enough food and water.

DID YOU KNOW?

During a siege most armies would try to starve out the towns folk by interrupting any deliveries of food to the town or by taking any livestock outside the walls. In most sieges people surrendered due to starvation and disease from lack of food and water.

DID YOU KNOW?

The worst time to lay siege to a town was in winter. The cold weather made it hard for the army to get the supplies and food they needed to survive the cold. Remember! Ireland's winters were a lot colder back in the 17th century than our winters today!

WEAPONS USED DURING THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

The Mortar

This device is easy to manoeuvre and can be used by one man alone. An explosive shell is fired high into the air and explodes on impact. Although it was difficult to aim, this weapon was the most destructive of those used.

The Musket

There were two types of musket; the matchlock and the flintlock, which could be as long as five feet and had a firing range of up to 300 yards. They were both loaded in the same way; gunpowder was poured into the barrel and packed in hard with a stick. Then the lead ball would be put in followed by wadding to hold the ball in place.

To fire the matchlock, the most common type of musket, the soldier would empty gunpowder into a pan and cover it to protect it. He would then press a lighted piece of flax into a metal trigger called the serpent. When the gun was fired the lighted flax in the serpent would come down into the pan and light the gunpowder. The flame from this would then enter the barrel of the gun and ignite the gunpowder that had been poured into it and the lead ball would be fired.

To fire the flintlock was slightly easier but more expensive. The pan would be filled in the same way but the serpent contained a piece of flint which, when it struck the pan, would produce a spark which would ignite the gunpowder.

Both weapons were dangerous and clumsy to use. Some of the longer muskets needed a rest to balance the barrel on because they were too heavy to hold. They were impossible to reload quickly and were most effective when a group of musketeers fired a volley of shots at the enemy.

The Cannon

The cannon were very heavy and difficult to move. The largest needed a team of 16 horses to move them. More commonly, smaller cannon were used but even these required at least 4 men to move them. For this reason they had to be put into position before a battle began. The missiles fired from the cannon were usually balls of iron, but sometimes stones were used. After the cannon had been fired the soldiers operating it had to go through a strict procedure of cleaning, loading the weapon and loading the gunpowder before it could be fired again. Aiming was difficult and the cannon were more effective as a means of instilling fear into the enemy than actually causing damage.

The Pike

The Pike was one of the most commonly used weapons on the battlefield. The pike was a long wooden shaft with a steel point on the end. They were cheap to make, soldiers required very little training to use them and they could be very effective especially when used in a group. Pikes were supposed to be sixteen feet in length but often soldiers sawed a few feet off the ends to make them easier to carry.

The Pikemen often formed the front line of an army. Operating together they had to lower their pikes to prevent a cavalry charge from breaking the ranks. The cavalrymen's horses would be injured by the pike and would fall to the ground unseating his rider who would then be an easy target for the musketmen or for the sword. If the army was surrounded then the pikemen would form a circle and lower or raise their pikes to provide a 'hedgehog' of cover.

THE SIEGE OF CLONMEL

Clonmel was besieged by Cromwell's forces on the 27th of April 1650. They were met with the impressive defences of Clonmel's stone walls, protected by Hugh Dubh O'Neill. O'Neill was the son of the famous Hugh the Great O'Neill.

He and his men defended Clonmel from Cromwell for three weeks. During this time Cromwell did all he could to get into the town. They mainly used cannons to break down the walls. However, when Cromwell's men broke down the wall near Short Street they were ambushed by O'Neill's men. O'Neill had built two walls perpendicular to the breach and another at the end, efficiently trapping Cromwell's men. Cromwell's forces suffered 2000 casualties as O'Neill struck from above.

Despite having surprised Cromwell with the ambush, O'Neill was badly outnumbered by his forces. When no reinforcements came to help Clonmel, O'Neill had to flee with his garrison to avoid capture. With no men left to defend the walls and low food supplies, the Mayor of Clonmel met with Cromwell and negotiated surrender. Due to Clonmel's brave and clever defence against him, Cromwell granted them his respect and the town was not looted or burnt down when taken over.

DID YOU KNOW?

The West Gate was where people who wanted to trade food with Clonmel had to pass through in order to come into the town? The West Gate would have had soldiers watching all the people coming in and out. The Gate would be locked at night with soldiers patrolling the wall in case someone attacked at night.

THE SIEGE OF DERRY

The 1649 Siege of Derry was a blockade where the besiegers attempted to cut off supplies and reinforcements from reaching the defenders.

It lasted from March to August with only a few direct assaults on the city walls were attempted. The 1649 siege was the first real test of the modern-era, bastioned city walls, surveyed as complete by Captain Nicholas Pynnar in 1619. The 1649 Siege of Derry differs from the 1650 Siege of Clonmel, because it was the Parliamentarians who were inside the city walls and the Royalists who were outside. Captain Henry Finch, one of defenders, left the only detailed account of the siege in a short diary. The 1689 Siege of Derry is more famous than the 1649 siege because more people died during the 1689 siege (but mostly as a result of disease and lack of food). Seven of the London Company cannon sent over in 1642 can still be seen on the Derry Walls.

How many people would it have taken to fire a cannon in the 17th century?

1. Two to pack in the gunpowder and put in the cannon ball.
2. Two to light the fuse and aim the cannon at the target.
3. Two to push the cannon back into position after firing.

Answer: Six!

DID YOU KNOW?

Musketeers carried their ammunition in a leather bandolier from which a number of wooden or leather tubes hung, each containing a measured charge of gunpowder. The tubes were known as the "Twelve Apostles" from their usual number. Also attached to the bandolier was an additional powder flask, a bag of bullets and a length of match.

DID YOU KNOW?

When Oliver Cromwell landed in Ireland in mid-August 1649, the only major town held by the Parliamentarians in Ulster was Derry, where Sir Charles Coote had made an unlikely alliance with Owen Roe O'Neill against a coalition of Royalists, Confederates, Ulster Scots and the Laggan Army.

DID YOU KNOW?

Openings called 'musket loops' can still be seen in the Derry Walls. Musketeers used these to fire out at the attacking army but keeping themselves hidden and safe behind the parapet wall. The outside of the musket-loop was narrower than the opening on the inside; do you know why?

Common phrases which derive from the use of muskets and cannon.

'Flash in the pan' i.e. something which disappoints by failing to deliver anything of value, despite a showy beginning. Flintlock muskets used to have small pans to hold charges of gunpowder. An attempt to fire the musket in which the gunpowder flared up without a bullet being fired was a 'flash in the pan'.

'a short fuse'– a short fuse on a cannon would result in a quick firing. A short fuse on a person would be referring to their quick temper going off.

'going off half-cocked' – a weapon half-cocked is the safety position of the weapon. A person who was too anxious, may forget to cock his weapon fully so that it would shoot.

Owen Roe O Neill was a professional soldier; he left Ireland as a young boy in the Flight of the Earls. He served for forty years in the Irish Regiment of the Spanish Army and returned to Ulster in 1642 to take part in the Rising.

New Model Army Soldiers Coat and Bandolier

Made of felted wool the Cromwellian soldier's coat was dyed red with root of madder which was imported into England from northern Italy or Greece.

Bandolier w- A bandolier is a pocketed belt for holding ammunition. It is usually worn sash-style over the shoulder, with the ammunition pockets across the midriff and chest. It contained small containers of wood, metal or cloth holding measured amounts of gunpowder for a single shot with muzzle-loading muskets or other guns, or early forms of cartridges also containing a ball.

The distinctive blue painted bottles of the bandolier worn by the New Model Army confirmed the soldier's allegiance.

Q1

Try on the red uniform jacket. Can you describe what it feels like? (Hint – comfortable, light or heavy). What do you think soldiers wore underneath it?

Q2

How does the manufacture of this uniform differ from making clothes and uniforms today? (Hint – materials, method of production)

Q3

Design a uniform you would like to wear. (Hint – colour, symbols, buttons – why?)

Irish Confederate Soldiers Coat and Bandolier

Pastimes

Soldiers Coat in 'Hodden Grey': the uniform colour of troops during the Irish Confederate Wars was a brownish grey – often the coats remained undyed.

Bandolier - A bandolier is a pocketed belt for holding ammunition. It is usually worn sash-style over the shoulder, with the ammunition pockets across the midriff and chest. It contained small containers of wood, metal or cloth holding measured amounts of gunpowder for a single shot with muzzle-loading muskets or other guns, or early forms of cartridges also containing a ball.

Deck of 16th century playing cards: this satirical deck of cards was designed by Nuremberg sculptor and artist Peter Flötner c. 1545. They would have been block printed and water coloured. The suit symbols are hearts, leaves, acorns and bells.

Dice - made of bone hence the phase 'roll them bones'...

Q1

Try on the Grey uniform jacket. Can you describe what it feels like? (Hint – comfortable, light or heavy). What do you think soldiers wore underneath it?

Q2

How does the manufacture of this uniform differ from making clothes and uniforms today? (Hint – materials, method of production)

Q3

Design a uniform you would like to wear. (Hint – colour, symbols, and buttons – why?)

Q1

What other personal items do you think soldiers may have carried in their pouch? (Hint – look at the photo)

Q2

Pretend you are a soldier laying siege to a town – what might you do to pass the time? (Hint – work and play)

Q3

Ask your grandparents what games they played as children.

'Tower' Proto-Mortuary hilted sword

The mortuary sword was in use until around 1670 and would have been used by Cromwell's New Model Army (Parliamentarians). The hilt is the name given to the handle and includes the hand guard, to protect the soldiers fighting hand from injury. This type of sword was issued mainly to cavalry soldiers. One believed to have been owned by Oliver Cromwell is now in the Royal Armouries, London.

Q1
Measure it against your arm. What length is the sword?

Q2
If you were in charge of defending the town during a siege where would you put the swords men?

Q3
Can you think of other types of weapons which were used during a siege?

Matchlock Musket and Powder horn

This matchlock musket was typical of the matchlock muskets used in both England and France during the first half of the 17th century.

The matchlock musket had an approximate range of 70-100 metres and a typical rate of fire of three shots per minute. The 'fishtail' stock could be used as a club in hand to hand engagements.

Powder horn – a container used to carry powder for a firearm, made from cow's horn. The copper alloy lever releases a measured amount of powder appropriate to the firearm it was provided for.

Q1
How does this weapon compare to weapons of today? (Hint - size, rate of fire, range of fire)

Q2
Why do you think weapons have changed over time?

Q3
Imagine you are a soldier in The New Model Army, fighting in Ireland in 1649/1650 describe an incident you are involved in using this musket.

Pikeman's Pot helmet and Monmouth Cap

Lollipop Stick Catapults

Pikeman's Pot helmet c.1610 – 1650. A mass produced helmet, the rounded skull and brim were designed to deflect downward blows. It is made in two pieces and joined in the centre by a 'comb' which added strength to the crown.

Monmouth cap made of knitted wool. These hats were often worn under the pikeman's helmet in lieu of a liner.

Q1

Lift the helmet – is it heavy? Why do you think it is? Would it have been easy to wear?

Q2

Why would a soldier need to wear a helmet?

Q3

Imagine you are the soldier who wore this helmet – tell your story.
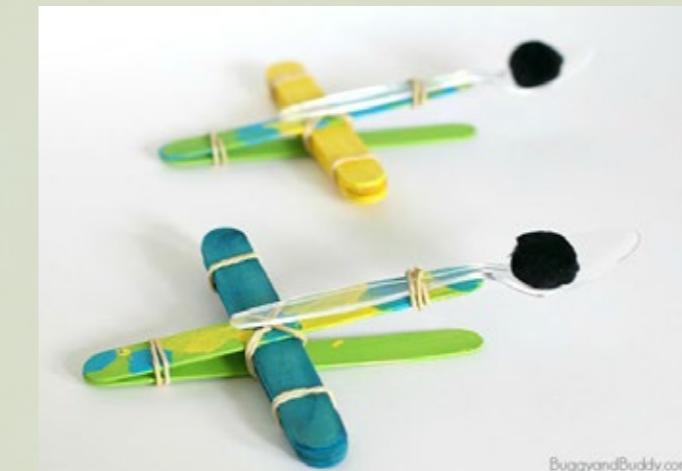
Materials

- Lollipop Sticks
- Elastic bands
- Plastic spoon
- Pom poms

Directions for Making Lollipop Stick Catapults

1. Make a stack of lollipop sticks and rubber band them together on each end.

2. Take two additional lollipop sticks and stack them together. Rubber band them together on just one end.

3. Pull the two lollipop sticks slightly apart and place the larger stack of lollipop sticks in between them.

4. Rubber band the stack of lollipop sticks to just the upper lollipop stick.

5. Rubber band a spoon to the upper lollipop stick.

6. Place a pom pom onto the spoon.

7. Hold the catapult with one hand, and use the other hand to pull the spoon down. Release the spoon to launch your pom pom!