

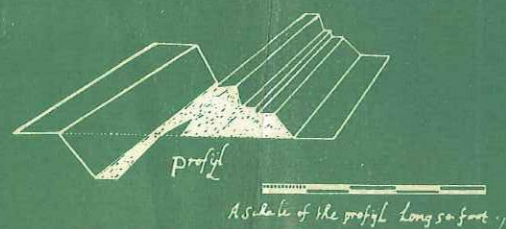
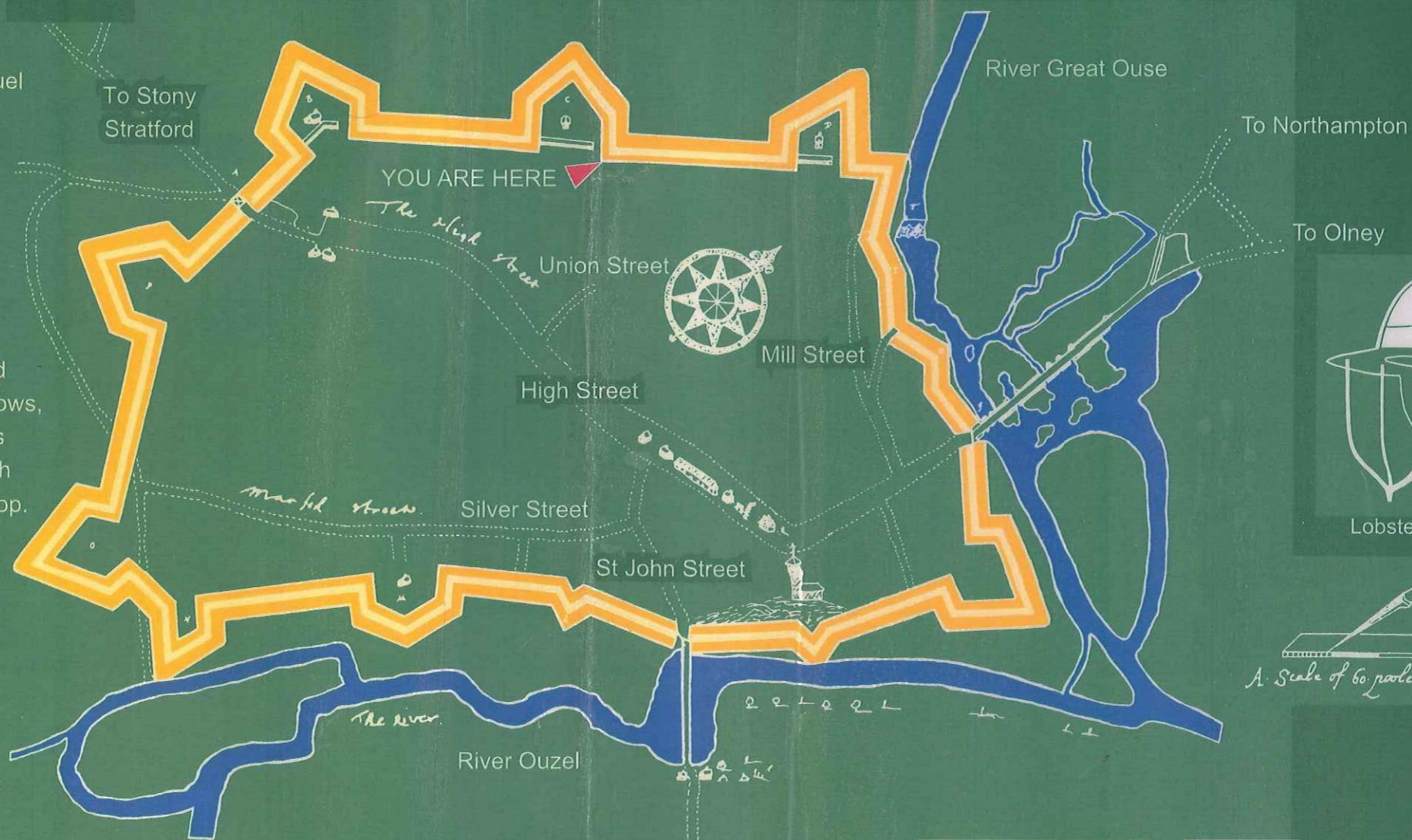
# Newport Pagnell And The Civil War

In front of you are remains of the Stone Bulwark, the wall and ditch of Newport's northern defences. Building commenced in 1643 after Royalists, led by Sir Lewis Dyves of Bromham Hall, near Bedford, captured Newport on the 6th of October. This was a diversion to aid the capture of Bedford by Prince Rupert. Sir Lewis, with Sir John Digby of Gayhurst, pressed local people to labour on the defences 'in their best interests'!

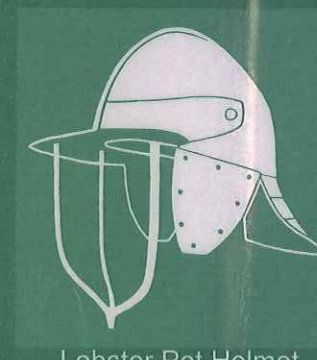
However, only 20 days later Parliamentary forces lead by Sir Samuel Luke re-took Newport, while the Royalists were in Stony Stratford. Sir Samuel put Sir Philip Skippon in charge of military operations.

On the 9th November the Royalists tried to retake Newport, but failed. Parliament then resumed building the town's defences with '300 shovels and spades, 200 pickaxes, 500 wheelbarrows, 400 spars and 1200 deal boards'. It is thought the wall was timber-faced, with spars or poles set horizontally at the top.

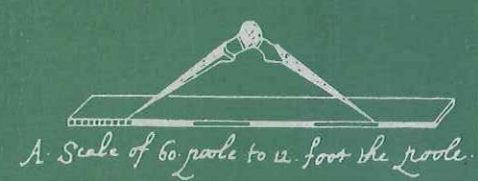
By June 1644, 1200 foot soldiers were based at Newport but over the next few months numbers were reduced to 500. Many were billeted in surrounding villages, often in wretched conditions. Sir Samuel Luke commented that two of his men had to share one pair of breeches! In 1648 Newport's defences were dismantled.



This profile shows the deep ditch and earth ramparts an attacker would face.



Lobster Pot Helmet



This plan shows the fortifications in 1644. Their design followed that of Italian military engineers, who pioneered low, thick earth bastions to withstand cannon fire better than traditional stone walls. The bastions were angled so defensive fire could be trained with deadly accuracy from two directions.

