

What happened at Basing House in the British Civil War?

A short introductory activity exploring the events and people of Basing House, Basingstoke during the Civil War of the 1640s in Britain.

Duration: 25 minutes

National Curriculum links

KS3 History

The development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509-1745

- The causes and events of the civil wars throughout Britain
 - Who fought in the Civil War?
 - How was the Civil War fought?
 - What was life like during the Civil War?

Cross-curricular links

- KS3 English
 - Spoken English
 - Reading

Learning context

Prior learning: a basic understanding of the British Civil War as Royalists versus Parliamentarians is required.

Learning objectives

- To learn how 17th century warfare differed from modern warfare
- To learn what happened at the local site of Basing House during the Civil War of the 1640s

Learning outcomes

All: will be able to investigate primary and secondary sources to understand that Basing House is a local site at which there were battles during the Civil Wars of the 1640s, and that people re-enact these battles.

Most: will be able to draw contrasts between 17th century and modern warfare; understand that Basing House's fortunes changed at different times during the Civil Wars and that the house fell to Cromwell's Parliamentary army in October 1645.

Some: will be able to critically interrogate and connect all sources to construct a simple chronology of what happened at Basing House, including some key names and battle details.

Activity resources

- 1) Where is Basing House? Map of Basingstoke – page 6
- 2) What was Basing House? Modern images of the site – page 7
- 3) The Sealed Knot YouTube video, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhHpbgmFfms> [2 minutes 48 seconds long. Watch up to 2 minutes].
- 4) Transcript of William Waller's 1643 letter to Speaker Lenthall – page 8
- 5) Modern artist's impression of the fall of Basing House, 14 October 1645 – page 9

Additional resources – for information, future learning or extension activity

- 1) Timeline of the Civil War at Basing House – page 10
- 2) Image of a letter from the Marquis of Winchester to King Charles I, requesting reinforcements, 1642 – page 11

What happened at Basing House? Lesson plan

Activities in this lesson plan can be run as whole-class teacher-directed discussion, or as group or pair discussion with feedback, or as individual reflection using the prompt questions.

Contents of this pack:

Page 3	Lesson plan
Page 4	Suggestions for future learning on this topic
Page 5	Further information on this topic
Pages 6-9	Activity resources
Pages 10-11	Additional resources

Resource developed by:

Helen Sinnamon

Schools Manager, Milestones Museum & Basing House, Hampshire Cultural Trust

Contact: helen.sinnamon@hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk or 01256 639550

January 2020

	Timing (mins)	Activity	Resources
Starter	0 – 5	<p>Where and what was Basing House?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the location of Basing House on the map. Relate this to locations/landmarks with which students are familiar 2) Look at modern images of the site to understand what Basing House was 	<p>Where and what was Basing House?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where is Basing House? Map of Basingstoke (page 6). 2) What was Basing House? Modern images of the site (page 7).
Development	5 – 15	<p>Civil War battle</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Watch the Sealed Knot video on YouTube up to 2 minutes 2) This is a re-enactment of a Civil War battle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a re-enactment? • In what ways would a re-enactment be different from a real 17th century battle? • What were the soldiers wearing? • Could you tell the two sides apart? • What protection did the soldiers have? • What different types of soldiers were there? • What weapons were they using? <p>What happened at Basing House? Read Sir William Waller's account of what happened in November 1643:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which side is Waller on? • What problems and difficulties does he have? • How many men does he lose? • How does he describe Basing House? • What does he end up doing and why? • How do you think he feels at this time? • What do you think he might do next? What would you do next? • How reliable is Waller's account of events? 	<p>Civil War battle</p> <p>The Sealed Knot YouTube video [2:48] at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhHpbgmFfms</p> <p>What happened at Basing House? Waller's 1643 letter to Speaker Lenthall (page 8)</p>

Plenary	15 – 25	<p>The fall of Basing House, 1645</p> <p>1) Study the modern artist's impression of the fall of Basing House on 14 October 1645. Compare this image to the video that you watched, and the letter you read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is happening at Basing House now, 2 years after Waller's letter? • What are the soldiers doing? • What weapons can you see? • What house defences are in place? • Are the defences being breached? If so, how? • What is happening to the house? • What might it have sounded like? Smelt like? <p>2) From these sources, summarise what you know about what happened at Basing House during the Civil War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further information might you need to develop a fuller picture of events? 	<p>The fall of Basing House, 1645</p> <p>What happened at Basing House? Modern artist's impression of the fall of Basing House, 14 October 1645 (page 9)</p>
---------	---------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Future learning

To learn more about what happened at Basing House during the Civil War:

- Watch Time Team Series 7, Episode 8: 'The Royalists' Last Stand' Basing House, Hampshire
- Visit Basing House and take part in the Civil War programme. Travel bursaries are also available.
- Attend a Sealed Knot re-enactment event, such as that at Basing House on 23 – 25 May 2020, or The English Civil War Society in September.

See 'Further Information' for details of these activities.

Possible historical enquiries:

- How important was Basing House?
- Why was Basing House important?
- Was Basing House worth defending?
- Was Basing House worth attacking?
- Were the Parliamentarians right to abandon the first two sieges of Basing House?
- What led to the downfall of Basing House?
- Were religious divides responsible for the downfall of Basing House?
- Was the fall of Basing House inevitable?
- Who was fighting at Basing House?
- What was life like at Basing House during the sieges of 1643-45?
- Did Basing House deserve the nickname "Loyalty House", given to it during the Civil War?

Further information

Basing House on television

Time Team Series 7, Episode 8: 'The Royalists' Last Stand' Basing House, Hampshire. First aired on Channel 4, February 2000. Duration: 46 minutes.

Tony Robinson presents as archaeologists look for evidence of the final siege of Basing House in 1645. The English Civil War Society demonstrates how the soldiers lived and prepared for battle.

Can be viewed online at: [Daily Motion](#) or [YouTube](#)

Civil War living history and re-enactment groups

- The Sealed Knot, a registered educational charity which principally performs re-enactments in local communities based around battles, skirmishes and sieges of the Civil War: [The Sealed Knot](#)
Next re-enactment at Basing House: 23-25 May 2020.
- The English Civil War Society shows both military and civilian aspects of life during the Civil War with a living history display as well as drill displays and skirmish re-enactments: [The English Civil War Society](#)
Next visit to Basing House by the Marquis of Winchester's regiment: 26-27 September 2020 TBC

Historic records and source material

Many original records for Basing House are kept in the Archives and Local Studies section of Hampshire County Council's Record Office: [Hampshire Record Office](#). The collection includes images, maps and legal and family documents.

Visits to Basing House

The ruins and grounds of Basing House are open to schools all year round by appointment and to the general public from April to October. See the [Basing House](#) website for public opening times and prices.

School visits: KS3 Civil War

A bookable full day programme that supports classroom learning on the topic of the Civil War, or can be used as a Humanities linked trip during Activities Week. Students participate in a range of active led and self-led hands-on activities exploring Civil War artefacts and replicas, and investigating the ruins of the site itself to piece together what happened and what life was like as a Civil War soldier at Basing in 1645. Contact: milestones.schools@hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk or 01256 639550.

Travel bursaries available

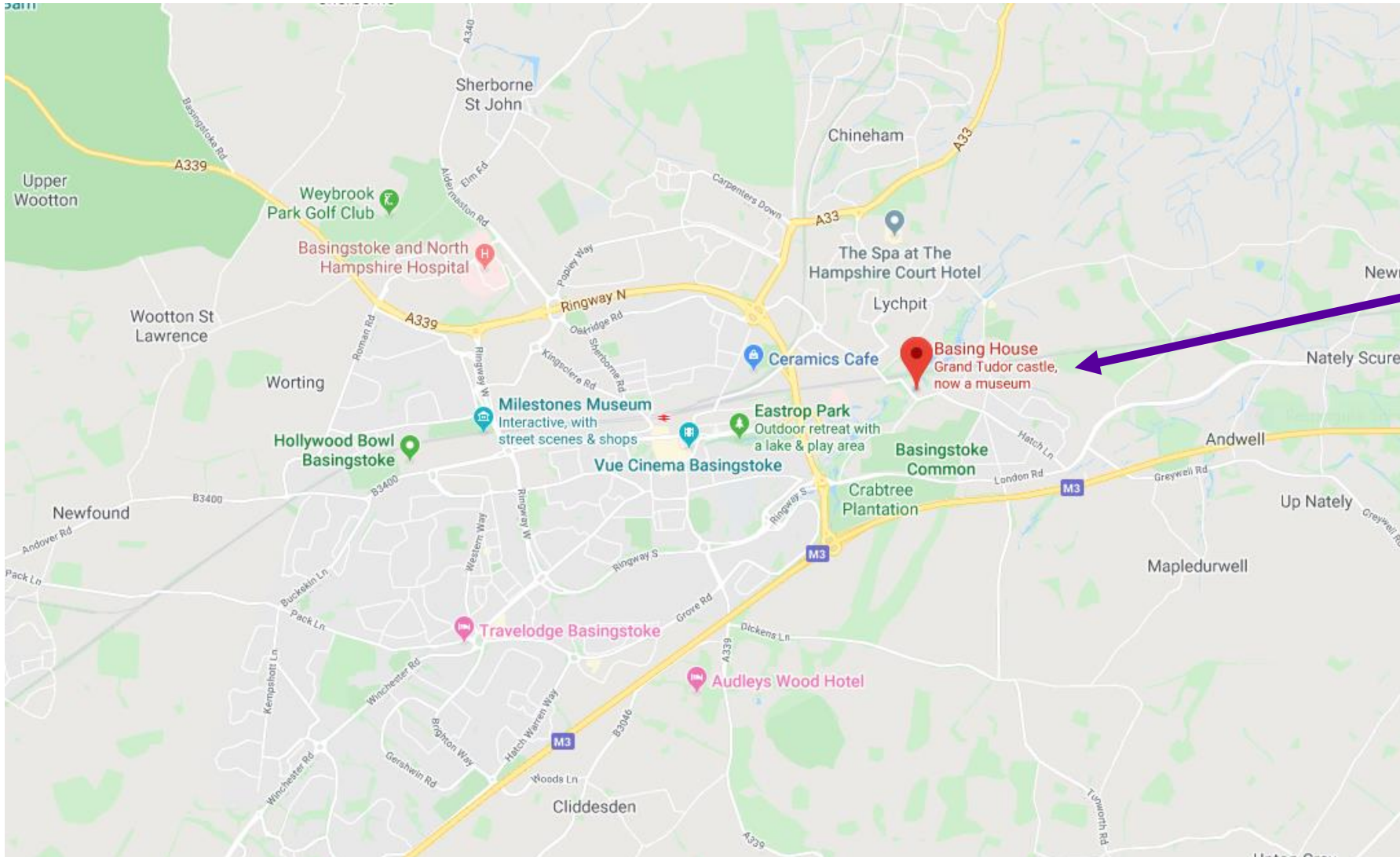
Travel bursaries of up to £400 are available to qualifying schools in North Hampshire through the Reaching Out project, funded by Arts Council and the Department for Education. To qualify, the school must:

- Book a visit to Basing House to take place before March 2021
- Have a Pupil Premium of 10% or more

Terms and conditions apply. Contact milestones.schools@hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk for more information.

Basing House is operated by [Hampshire Cultural Trust](#), an independent charity which promotes Hampshire as a county that offers outstanding cultural experiences to both its residents and visitors.

Where is Basing House?



**Basing House –
east of
Basingstoke in
Old Basing**

What was Basing House?



A great Tudor
palace, destroyed
in the Civil War –
only the Great Barn
still stands, the rest
is now ruins



The following extract is from the publication: Adair, J. 1981. *They Saw it Happen. Contemporary Accounts of the Siege of Basing House*, Hampshire County Council, pp 6-10.

Sir William Waller's fight against Basing House, November 1643: Waller's letter to Speaker Lenthall

"Att my first coming to Basing I received an assurance that there was no danger could threaten me - for the present - from Oxford, whereupon I resolved to attempt that place. I was first guided to the north side of the house which was most commanded and fitteset to batter but upon a triall I found that the enemy had fortified most strongly on that side, with diverse retrenchments one under command of another. We tooke in some outhouses adjoining to their workes, but the enemy fired them so that wee were faine to quitt them. We lost in that fight twleve or thirteen men, and as many more hurt. This and the coldness of the night with fowle weather was a great discouragement to the London regiments, who were not used to this hardness in so much as the officers came to me and made itt their request they might be drawn off, with an intimation that many of the souldiours were hirelings, and their monye being spent, they began to thinke of their returne. The first remonstrance in this kinde was made by the field officers, the second by the captaines and inferious officers. This was a great surprise to me, but the weakness of my condition without them, inforced me to yeeld upon condition they would give me in their desires under their hands which they did. Upon this, I drew the army into Basing Stoke to refresh itt for two of three dayes. In the meantime I seised upon the Vine - an house so called belonging to Mr. Sands - and putt some forces into itt, intending to fortify itt, and in regards of the neerne(ss to Basing) to make itt a bridle to that place to cutt off their contributions, and subsistence.

The army beeing sufficiently refreshed, I resolved (to have ano)ther fling att Basing, upon an information I had received of a place that might give me some advantage. I intended to have fallen on before day, but the sluggishness of the soldiours was such that itt was afternoone a good while before I could come upp. The order was to give the ennemy allarums on all sides, and to fall on, on two sides, the one thorough the Parke, the other on the side towards Basing towne. Att this last place I set upp my rest where Major Strahan, - as gallant brave gentleman as drawes a sword - fell on with his dragoones, seconded by mine own regiment, and the four companyes of Colonell Jones, and the petardier with them.

This was performed with as much courage and resolution as could be don by men. The ennemy had quitted one of their works, our men gained the rampart, and the petardier applied his petard, but unluckily mistooke the place - for whereas he should have applied to a place in the ould wall which was but brick and a half thick, he sett it against a doore that was bricked upp and lined with earth, so that it tooke no effect. In the mean time that squadron of the red regiment that should have fallen upon the Parke side on the worke that flanked us, and where there remained but six muskietiers, the rest beeing run away, could not be drawn upp, only they fired out of distance, and so fell off againe. This gave the enemy new courage, so that they fell againe into their workes and beat our men off. I lost in this service, thirty men upon the place, and neere fowle that I could not possibly keep my men upon their gards, so that I was forced to draw into Basing."

What happened at Basing House?



Basing House: significant events during the Civil War

1642

August

King Charles I raise his standard at Nottingham, formally declaring war.

October

Battle of Edgehill, the first set piece, ends in stalemate.

December

John Paulet appeals for troops to help defend Basing.

1643

November

William Waller leads the first siege of Basing House, which includes the battle for the Great Barn.

1644

April

Battle of Cheriton (not far from Basing).

June

Second siege of Basing House.

September

Colonel Henry Gage relieves Basing House with supplies.

November

Col. Gage ends the second siege.

1645

May

Protestants ordered to leave the Basing garrison.

June

Battle of Naseby.

August

The third and final siege begins at Basing.

8th October

Oliver Cromwell arrives at Basing House with reinforcements.

14th October

Basing falls to Oliver Cromwell; the House is consumed in flames.



Most gracious Souveraigne

Since by Commande your ma^{tyes} forces at Basingstoke are drawing off, and y^e enemy now lying wth lesse then ten miles of this place, I conceive this Castle to be in apperent danger and cannot be long kept wthout some assistance from your ma^{tyes} army; for from this county no reliefe is to be expected it standyng for want of your presence and some authority to commande it divided wth itself. If this should be an unavayse consideration for your ma^{tyes} service and advantage, be pleased to take it into your consideration and protection least I be necessitated to leave it to the will of the enemy. I referre more particuler to the relation of this matter in case your ma^{tyes} will vouchsafe to speake wth him. My duty and affection to your ma^{tyes} service occasions this addressi from

Basing the 2
of Dec: 1642

Your Ma^{tyes} most faithful
and Loyal Subject

Winchester