

Oliver Cromwell: England's Republican Head [B2]

Oliver Cromwell ha affascinato gli storici per centinaia di anni: per alcuni fu un dittatore assassino, per altri un difensore della libertà religiosa e parlamentare. Nato in una famiglia di semplici contadini, divenne il leader dell'unico periodo repubblicano dell'Inghilterra.



Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) is one of the most controversial figures in British (if not world) history. A modest farmer, he [rose](#) through his radical religious [beliefs](#) and military [skills](#) to become Britain's Lord Protector. [Ruling](#) over a republic, Cromwell was the only [non-royal](#) ever to rule the country.

[STRONG BELIEFS](#)

Cromwell was a devout Puritan, and he entered Parliament in 1640, determined to cut the remaining [links](#) of the country's dominant Protestant Church to its Roman Catholic past. The Church of England had broken its [ties](#) with the Catholic Church in the 16th century, but religious differences, sometimes [bloody](#) ones, still existed.

I tell you we will cut off his head with the crown upon it.

POLITICAL DISAGREEMENTS

These religious differences were an important part of the increasingly serious disagreements between the King, Charles I (Protestant but married to a Catholic queen), and Parliament, as the two sides fought over the [running](#) of the country. Charles believed in the divine right of kings to rule, while Parliament wanted to control his powers. The disagreements finally ended in a [bitter](#) civil war (1642-51).

LEADING ROLE

Cromwell had taken a leading role on the Parliamentary side, attacking royal powers. As the country moved towards civil war, the Royalists against the Parliamentarians, he decided to help Parliament [raise troops](#). He then entered the army. Given his [lack](#) of military experience, his rise in this new army was spectacular. A captain in 1642, he was a [lieutenant](#) general by 1645. He was made Lord General for campaigns in Ireland (1649-50) and Scotland (1650-51). Cromwell had a great ability to [instil](#) self-belief in his soldiers, and he looked after them like a mother!

IRISH CAMPAIGN

The Irish campaign was incredibly controversial. Before the campaign, the Catholics had [risen up](#) against the Protestants, killing thousands, some cruelly. English reports exaggerated the violence. Cromwell went to Ireland principally to attack Royalist troops preparing to fight, but also [to avenge](#) the killings. His troops killed thousands of Catholic men, women and children, as well as hundreds of Catholic [priests](#), using extreme violence.

THE KING'S EXECUTION

The Parliamentarians captured the King in 1647. He was [put on trial](#), found guilty of tyranny and treason and then executed — the only public execution

of a British head of state — with Cromwell heavily involved. The masked executioner wore a wig and a false beard to protect his identity. In 1653, Cromwell became Lord Protector, ruling the country as a republic, but with many of the powers of a king.

RESTORING THE MONARCHY

Cromwell led the country until his death in 1658. Charles I's son then returned from the Netherlands to be crowned King Charles II. In 1661, Cromwell's body was removed from Westminster Abbey and hanged. Over two hundred years later, in 1899, a statue of Cromwell was erected outside Parliament. Considering the number of public statues forcibly removed in recent years, its days may be numbered.

Put your TRUST in God, my boys, and keep your POWDER DRY.

Glossary

- **lack** = mancanza
- **instil** = infondere
- **priests** = preti
- **removed** = rimuovere
- **DRY** = secca
- **skills** = abilità, capacità
- **raise troops** = reclutare soldati
- **its days may be numbered** = potrebbe avere i giorni contati
- **bloody** = violento, sanguinoso
- **running** = governo, amministrazione
- **to avenge** = vendicare
- **POWDER** = polvere da sparo
- **Ruling** = governare
- **bitter** = vendicativa
- **lieutenant** = tenente
- **links** = vincoli
- **heavily involved** = pesantemente coinvolto
- **hanged** = appendere
- **non-royal** = che non appartiene all'aristocrazia
- **ties** = relazioni
- **risen up** = sollevarsi, ribellarsi
- **forcibly** = per forza, forzatamente
- **beliefs** = credenze
- **wig** = parrucca
- **beard** = barba
- **rose** = ascendere
- **put on trial** = mettere sotto process