

# Absolutism vs. Constitutionalism

absolutism:  
a form of government in which a monarch has unlimited power

constitutionalism:  
governmental authority is limited by laws  
laws can be written or unwritten



## The English Parliament

House of Lords  
upper class of aristocracy

House of Commons  
lower class of commoners



# Agriculture Affects Government

new agricultural techniques improved  
agricultural yield

enclosure movement:  
old common lands enclosed and turned into  
sheep runs

“commoners” becoming wealthy:  
rented out lands  
invested in commercial ventures  
made good marriages



It is said that members of the House of Commons were so wealthy  
they could “*buy the House of Lords three times over!*”

willing to pay higher taxes, but...  
wanted to be sure they had a voice in the government



## The Stuart Dynasty Begins

1603: childless Queen Elizabeth dies

James Stuart becomes King James I of England

Stuart Dynasty begins

(a Stuart ruled England from 1603-1625)

Scottish James I  
did not understand  
many English laws or customs  
when urged to wave at crowds  
he threatened to drop his pants  
“*so they can cheer at my arse*”

### **the Great Chain of Being and Divine Right of Kings:**

kings receive their power directly from God

*King James Bible = during the reign of James I*

James’ essay on his ideas of divine right: “**The Trew Law of Free Monarchy**”

*Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth: for if you will consider the attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake at his pleasure, to give life or send death, to judge all and to be judged nor accountable to none; to raise low things and to make high things low at his pleasure, and to God are both souls and body due. And the like power have kings: they make and unmake their subjects, they have power of raising and casting down, of life and of death, judges over all their subjects and in all causes and yet accountable to none but God only. . . .*

# Conflict

## The Gunpowder Plot of 1605



plan was to blow up the House of Lords  
James's Catholic daughter would be new leader  
an anonymous letter revealed the plot to the authorities  
they searched the House of Lords at midnight  
Guy Fawkes found guarding gunpowder barrels  
eight men, including Fawkes, were arrested  
all were convicted: hanged, drawn and quartered

James liked to squander money on a lavish court  
accumulated a lot of debt

Parliament, used to ruling *with* the king,  
showed their anger by using the “power of the purse”

James died in 1625 and was succeeded by his son, Charles I

in 1628 Parliament passed the **Petition of Right**:

no taxes without Parliament's consent,  
no arbitrary imprisonment,  
no quartering of soldiers in private homes,  
no declaring martial law in times of peace



# Charles I

Charles I officially accepted the Petition of Right, but then decided that since he and Parliament couldn't seem to work together, he just wouldn't summon it to meet



## Ship Money Tax

seacoast towns had always paid a tax to pay for coastal defense  
Charles made inland towns begin to pay the tax as well

middle class merchants and gentry opposed this:  
accused the king of taxing without Parliament's consent

## Controversy: Was Charles Protestant or Catholic?

wife = *Henrietta Maria*  
Catholic sister of French King Louis XIII

close friends with Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud  
*known to have very Catholic leanings*

tried to force Scotland to use the Anglican Book of Prayer

Charles = no money = no troops  
forced to call a Parliament to appropriate defense funds

# The English Civil War



Charles tried to widen a division in Parliament by arresting some radicals  
other radicals are outraged and civil war begins

|   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| Charles = Royalists<br>("Cavaliers")<br>nobility, cavalry staff,<br>merchants seeking law and order | V. | Parliament = Parliamentarians<br>("Roundheads")<br>London city militiamen, country squires<br>with business connections |
|---|----|---|

devout Puritan Oliver Cromwell created the New Model Army:  
extreme Puritans who believed they were doing battle for the Lord  
ended with Cromwell's victory and capture of the king



## Cromwell Rules

Cromwell kicked out all members of Parliament  
opposed to putting Charles I on trial for treason  
this "Rump Parliament" put Charles I on trial  
convicted him of treason  
executed him on January 30, 1649

*"He, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of his nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body."*



1653  
Cromwell became Commander-In-Chief of the army, head of  
the Rump Parliament, and named "Lord Protector"  
created a 15-member Council of State  
abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords  
some members of Parliament questioned his authority

1655  
Cromwell dissolved Parliament  
divided the country into 11 military districts, each ruled by a  
major general

# Cromwell's Rules



gave all religions BUT Catholics the right to practice their religion  
censored the press and closed theaters  
changed feast days to *fast* days

banned Christmas celebrations

forbade the use of makeup, colorful dress, and the playing of sports

punishments included whippings, being put in the stocks, fines, and/or jail terms



# Cromwell Dies

1658: Cromwell dies: malaria? kidney infection? poisoning?

his coffin was escorted by 30,000 soldiers

*"It was the joyfullest funeral I ever saw;  
for there were none that cried but dogs"*

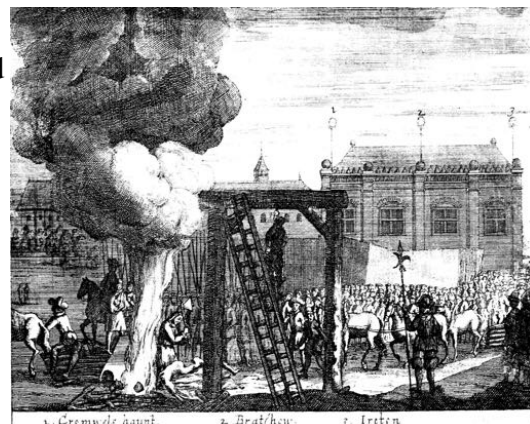
John Evelyn

Cromwell's son Richard succeeded him  
after only 18 months Charles II came out of exile and  
was restored to the throne

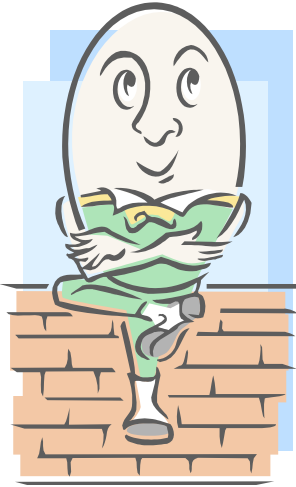
monarchy reestablished: called "The Restoration"

Royalists desecrated Cromwell's body  
exhumed, hanged, and drawn and quartered  
his head was placed on a pole at Westminster Abbey  
(traditional punishment for treason at the time)

remained there for for 24 years



# Is Humpty Dumpty about the English Civil War?



“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men  
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.”

“According to an insert taken from the East Anglia Tourist Board in England, Humpty Dumpty was a powerful cannon used in the Siege of Colchester during the English Civil War. It was mounted on top of the church in Colchester, a Royalist stronghold against a Roundheads siege in the summer of 1648. The church tower was hit by enemy cannon fire and the top of the tower was blown off, sending ‘Humpty’ tumbling to the ground. Naturally all the King's horses and all the King's men (royalist cavalry and infantry respectively) tried to mend ‘him’ but in vain.”

*Professor David Daube in The Oxford Magazine of February 16, 1956*