

A short piece on favours

By Charles Singleton

With reference to Stuart Peachey's work on Soldiers clothing



Favours, like scarves, were used during the Civil Wars to denote allegiance. Their primary purpose, however was to indicate which company within the regiment the soldier belonged too. Midland's recruits for the First Bishops War, were issued "one yard of ribbon per man, at 5d a yard". Those troops sent by Parliament to fight in the support of Hull in 1642 were described as sporting red and yellow ribbons in their hats. Parliamentarian troops based in Dorset were issued with ribbons made of sarsnet fabric.

We have no way of knowing how widespread the wearing of favours was during the conflict or how long it lasted for. Certainly, during the early part of the conflict, where there was little uniformity, they would have been a viable option that would help in the organising of new recruits into military ways. They would have certainly helped the new soldier develop a sense of identity and belonging to the group, be it his new regiment or company.

this close up detail of a painting by Dobson, shows Colonel William Murray symbolically changing the colour of his favour by dipping it in red wine.



For many commentators they were to be an unpopular and unsoldierly adornment. John Mallet writing to a fellow officer in August 1643, "(sic)...the daubing of a coat with lace of sundry colours, as some do, I take to be neither soldier like or profitable for the coat...as they will often tear the coat...".

The favours that have been made for Devereux's regiment, reflect the red of the current jackets we wear and the oranges linings that many of our 'veteran' troops sport with pride.

Private Sentinel Brohan sports a regimental favour